

special issue

The New Criterion

MOMA reopened

The Museum of Modern Art
in the postmodern era

by Hilton Kramer

"It is assuredly a new MOMA that we have now been given—a museum not only greatly enlarged physically but significantly altered in its general outlook and spirit."

Summer 1984

\$3.50

GREGORY AMENOFF, LOUISA CHASE, JEDD GARET,
ROBERTO JUAREZ, ROBERT S. ZAKANITCH

represented by

ROBERT MILLER, 724 FIFTH AVE, NEW YORK

May exhibition

BRUCE WEBER: PHOTOGRAPHS OF ATHLETES

Georg Baselitz
Tony Berlant
John Chamberlain
William Crozier
Willem de Kooning
Marcel Duchamp
Raymond Duchamp-Villon
Arshile Gorky
Raoul Hague
Michael Heizer
Jan Henle
Eva Hesse
Le Corbusier
Joan Mitchell
Malcolm Morley
Catherine Murphy
Dorothea Rockburne
Tony Smith
H.C. Westermann

XAVIER FOURCADE INC.

36 East 75th Street New York, New York 10021 212 535-3980



*Boxer • Jack Bush • Caro • Conlon • Dorazio • Burgoyne Diller
Sam Francis • Frankenthaler • Gibbons • Goodnough • John Graham
Al Held • Hockney • Hans Hofmann • Liberman • Morris Louis
John McLaughlin • Ben Nicholson • Noland • Olitski • Pepper
Perlman • Poons • Steiner • Tatafiore • Truitt • are represented by
ANDRÉ EMMERICH GALLERY at 41 East 57th Street, New York*

The New Criterion *Special Issue*

Editor *Hilton Kramer*

Publisher *Samuel Lipman*

Managing Editor *Erich Eichman*

Assistant Managing Editor *Eva Szent-Miklosy*

Poetry Editor *Robert Richman*

Office Manager *Colleen Babington*

Editorial Intern *Eileen Gillespie*

Contributors to this issue

Hilton Kramer is the editor of *The New Criterion*. He was formerly the editor of *Arts Magazine*, the art critic of *The Nation* and *The New Leader*, and the chief art critic and art news editor of *The New York Times*. He is the author of *The Age of the Avant-Garde*, a collection of critical writings on the art of the modern period, and of monographs on Milton Avery, Gaston Lachaise, and Richard Lindner. His current book projects include *The Revenge of the Philistines*, a new collection of art criticism from the years 1972-1984, and *Abstract Art: A Cultural History*. He has taught at Indiana University, the University of Colorado, Bennington College, and Yale University. He has lectured at many museums and universities, and is also widely published as a writer on literary and cultural subjects.

John T. Hill is a photographer who has specialized in corporate and industrial subjects. He was formerly the Director of Graduate Studies in Photography at the Yale University School of Art. His work has appeared in *The New York Times Magazine* and many other publications.

The New Criterion is published monthly except July and August by The Foundation for Cultural Review, Inc., 850 Seventh Avenue, New York, NY 10019. Publication Number ISSN 0734-0222. Summer 1984. Subscription rates: \$27 for one year, \$50 for two. Second-class postage paid at New York, NY and at additional mailing offices. Postmaster: send changes of address to 850 Seventh Avenue, New York, NY 10019. Copyright © 1984 by The Foundation for Cultural Review, Inc. Distributed in England by Periodicals in Particular, 1 Prince of Wales Passage, 117 Hampstead Road, London, NW1. Editorial/business correspondence should be addressed to The New Criterion, 850 Seventh Avenue, New York, NY 10019. (212) 247-6980. Notice of nonreceipt of an issue must be sent to the Office Manager within three months of its date.

Advertising representative: Catherine Shanley, 521 Fifth Ave., NY 10175. (212) 268-2162; 757-6454.

The New Criterion is designed by Alvin and James Eisenman and printed by the Eastern Press of New Haven, Connecticut.

M. Knoedler & Co.

Walter Darby Bannard

Michael David

Richard Diebenkorn

Friedel Dzubas

Herbert Ferber

Adolph & Esther Gottlieb
Foundation, Inc.

Nancy Graves

Howard Hodgkin

Robert Motherwell

Jules Olitski

Estate of Ludwig Sander

Estate of David Smith

Frank Stella

John Walker

19 East 70 Street. New York 10021

Telephone (212) 794-0550



*"And what do you think
he has done with his library....
He has left it to your friend Miss Stackpole....
It contains a great many rare and valuable books
and as she can't carry it about the world in her trunk
he recommends her to sell it at auction.
She will sell it of course
at Christie's...."*
Henry James,
Portrait of a Lady

In 1881, when Henry James' story of Americans in England and Italy was published, Christie's had already been selling fine and decorative art at auction for 115 years.

In the more than 100 years since then, the English have come to America and now Christie's is thriving on both sides of the Atlantic. Our New York galleries at 502 Park Avenue and 219 East 67th Street are both open for free verbal appraisals Monday through Friday from 10:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. and we welcome your inquiries. Christie's. Experts at the art of auction since 1766.

*A British tradition.
An American success.*

Important Paintings
and Sculpture

**james goodman
gallery**

1020 Madison Avenue
New York 10021
Tel (212) 772-2288

**APPEL
BOTERO
CALDER
DE Kooning
DUBUFFET
GIACOMETTI
KLEE
LICHTENSTEIN*
MATISSE
MIRO
MOORE
PICASSO
TWOMBLY**

* Also available

Roy Lichtenstein: A Drawing Retrospective
Fully illustrated 54 page catalogue, \$20 ppd.
Six-color poster, 36" x 24", \$20 ppd.

Congratulations to MoMA

HIRSCHL & ADLER Modern

851 Madison Avenue New York, New York 10021 212 744-6700

pierre matisse gallery

in new york since 1932 at 41 east 57

balthus

1938 · 39 · 49 · 57 · 62 · 67 · 77

butler

1959 · 62 · 73

calder

1934 · 36 · 37 · 40 · 41 · 42 · 43

chagall

1941 · 42 · 44 · 45 · 46 · 47 · 48 · 68 · 68 · 69 · 72 · 73 · 75 · 79 · 81 · 82

chirico

1935 · 40

dubuffet

1947 · 47 · 47 · 48 · 50 · 51 · 52 · 54 · 56 · 58 · 59 · 78

giacometti

1948 · 50 · 58 · 61 · 64

lam

1942 · 44 · 45 · 48 · 50 · 82

mac iver

1940 · 44 · 49 · 56 · 61 · 66 · 70 · 81

matta

1942 · 44 · 45 · 46 · 47

millares

1965 · 74

miró

1932 · 33 · 35 · 36 · 38 · 39 · 40 · 41 · 42 · 44 · 45 · 45 · 47 · 48 · 49 · 50 · 51 · 51 ·
1953 · 56 · 58 · 59 · 61 · 63 · 65 · 67 · 70 · 72 · 73 · 73 · 75 · 76 · 76 · 78 · 80 · 83

riopelle

1954 · 56 · 69 · 74 · 74 · 77

roszak

1962 · 74

rouan

1976 · 82 · 84

saura

1961 · 64 · 71

tanguy

1939 · 42 · 43 · 45 · 46 · 50 · 63

zao wou-ki

1980

major one-man exhibitions since 1932

MOMA reopened

The Museum of Modern Art in the postmodern era

by Hilton Kramer

I. Toward the new MOMA

The Museum of Modern Art in New York has long been regarded—and has long regarded itself—as the greatest institution of its kind in the world. Its collections are acknowledged to be unrivaled in quality and number, and for more than half a century its exhibition program together with the publications that derive from it have played a crucial role in shaping our understanding of what, in fact, the very notion of “modern art” may be said to encompass. From the outset, moreover, the museum undertook to define its interests—and thus those of modern art—in broad terms, embracing not only painting, sculpture, and the graphic arts, but also architecture, photography, industrial design, and film. In this respect, too, MOMA (as it has come to be called) has exerted an immense influence. For other institutions in the field it has served as something of a model and inspiration, and for its large and constantly expanding public it has served as a source of pleasure and instruction as well as a touchstone of taste and certification. So central has been its role in defining both the standards and the scope of modern art that the museum’s own activities and ideas have in themselves come to constitute a distinct chapter in the cultural history which MOMA was originally conceived to monitor, to document, to pass judgment upon, to preserve. Indeed, it is no exaggeration to suggest that in 1984, fifty-five years

after the founding of the museum, no single living artist can now be said to rival MOMA itself for the sheer glamour and prestige it has come to enjoy in the eyes of its adoring public.

It was to be expected, then, that the reopening of the museum in May of this year would be seen to be an event of historic importance. After all, for the better part of four years MOMA has been more of an absence than a presence on the art scene, and it has been an absence keenly felt. Giving full priority to its long-awaited rebuilding and expansion program, the museum pretty much ceased to be what it had been for half a century—the central reference point for anyone seriously interested in the history of modern art. With its collections either dispatched to other venues or locked up in storage and its exhibition schedule drastically curtailed when not altogether suspended, MOMA gradually became something of a ghost of its former existence, continuing to haunt the life of art yet no longer an active participant in it. Expectations for its return were made all the higher, of course, by the promise of a “new” MOMA—a transformed museum boasting a glittering new building, with vastly expanded facilities both for the installation of the permanent collections that are MOMA’s greatest glory and for the temporary shows that have been so essential a part of its contribution to contemporary cultural life. And it is assuredly a new MOMA that we have now been given—

a museum not only greatly enlarged physically but significantly altered in its general outlook and spirit.

Much that we cherished in the old MOMA remains as it was, and at times looks even better than one remembered. Certainly a great effort has been made, especially in the galleries devoted to the permanent collection of painting and sculpture, to concentrate (as the museum always has) on quality—to give us the best of the art that the modern era has bequeathed to us, and to confer upon our intercourse with this art that special feeling of intimacy and awe we gratefully recall from years in attendance at the old MOMA. Yet there is no avoiding the fact that a great many changes—some of them quite subtle, and some not subtle at all—have gone into the making of the new MOMA, and the most important of these is the revised perspective it now brings to modern art itself.

For the new MOMA is, among many other things, a museum even more deeply entrenched than hitherto in the history of modern art and in modern art as history. It is also a museum now governed by a sharper and more narrowly defined view of that history than formerly obtained in the museum. It is a view that owes much to the critical thought of the last quarter-century. Its outlook may best be characterized, I think, as that of art-historical formalism, and it is in the nature of the strengths and the weaknesses of this outlook that it serves as a better guide to some kinds of art than to others, and that it is generally more useful in charting the art-historical past than in coming to grips with the present. For as a means of dealing with the present, this formalist outlook tends—one is tempted to say, inevitably—to lead to a false orthodoxy. And attempts to compensate for, or guard against, such orthodoxy tend, in turn, to lead to a virtual abandonment of any discernible standards.

The consequence of this for the new MOMA is made vividly clear in its inaugural installations. Whereas the task of tracing the history

of modern art has been undertaken with an impressive sense of confidence, intelligence, and discrimination—even if the confidence may be said at times to border on overconfidence—the more challenging task of coming to terms with the art of the present has been badly botched. At least as far as painting and sculpture are concerned—and it is these that remain the principal interest of the new MOMA, as they were of the old—the museum now reveals itself to be an institution that finds it increasingly difficult to get its bearings in a contemporary art scene that does not lend itself to the fixed ideas and tidy categories of the formalist outlook.

It must be acknowledged, in any discussion of this problem, that the division separating MOMA's role as a custodian and codifier of history from its other role as an arbiter of contemporary taste has been the source of a built-in conflict in museum policy from the very beginning—as, indeed, it usually is for any cultural institution which undertakes to fix our understanding of the past at the same time that it seeks to discriminate among the claims of the present. It is not the problem itself that is new, but the extent to which history has now given it a new dimension and thereby rendered it all but unmanageable. For the passage of time, far from ameliorating this division and enabling the museum to reconcile the conflicting pressures it brings in its wake, has only succeeded in exacerbating these contradictory consequences. So deeply has this division penetrated to the core of the museum's sense of its own identity that it has now gone a long way in determining not only the aesthetic character but even the physical structure of the new MOMA.

What is really new in the new MOMA is not so much the added space the museum has acquired—important as that may be—as the way it has utilized that space as a means of institutionalizing this categorical separation of the past from the present. As a result, the new MOMA is no longer a single museum with a unified purpose and outlook, but two (or more) museums which

pursue vastly different objectives and uphold very different standards.

All of this is plainly legible in the design of the new MOMA. Here again, in the very disposition of the museum's new space as well as in the way the space has been appointed, the policy already familiar to us in the old MOMA—the policy of making a sharp distinction between the parts of the museum in which we are intended to view modern art as history and those in which we are left to deal with contemporary art as an element of a new and uncoded cultural experience—has been elevated to the level of a structural principle. There may even be a certain symbolism in the way visitors to the museum are obliged to ascend—to the second, third, and fourth stories—in order to commune with the certified masterworks of modern art, whereas they must descend from these higher elevations to the lower levels of the building in order to study the “temporary” productions garnered from the current art scene. (In keeping with this symbolism, the movies of course are consigned to the lowest levels of the museum.) Even for contemporary works that have been nominated for permanent status and, on that provisional basis, accorded temporary lodging on the third floor—where, presumably, they may be properly tested for durability in the neighborhood of permanence—the same sharp distinction obtains between paintings and sculpture deemed to be permanently permanent, so to speak, and those judged for the moment to be only potentially permanent.

I do not mean to mock this policy. There are few alternative courses open to a museum that invests so large a portion of its space and resources in codifying a correct “reading” of the past at the same time that it persists in the vexing task of explaining the present. Still, while the alternatives may be few, if any, the comedy as well as the contradictions and pitfalls inherent in such a policy are worth noting, for they tell us something important about the way judgments in art come to be institutionalized. They alert us to the fact that history—in this case, the history

of modern art—rests not on some immutable system of interpreting what artists have achieved but on particular acts of judgment made at particular times in particular circumstances.

Something else is also plainly legible in the design of the new MOMA. This is the important role played in the very conception of the building's design by the change that has lately occurred in the size and in the character of the museum's public. Indeed, the role played by this change is so important that it may very well be considered dominant. Which is to say that the new MOMA is a museum designed, as the old MOMA never was, to accommodate huge crowds of people—not all of whom, moreover, can be expected or in fact are expected to have an informed or even a very compelling interest in the art to be seen in the museum (though they may have—what is not the same thing—a compelling curiosity to see what it is). The new museum is designed, we may say, for a public nurtured on blockbuster exhibitions—exhibitions that are as much media events as they are art events, and that have the inevitable effect of arousing, by means of high-intensity publicity campaigns, the kind of interest which art in and of itself can probably never fully satisfy.

It will be recalled that MOMA was itself responsible for mounting what remains in many ways the most spectacular of the recent blockbuster exhibitions. This was the great Picasso retrospective, numbering around one thousand works by the artist, which occupied the old MOMA building in its entirety during the spring and summer months of 1980, and filled it with capacity crowds (seven thousand visitors a day). Although it was little noted at the time—probably because Picasso has a way of consuming all of our attention, and this was more of Picasso than anyone had ever before met with in one place at one time—this exhibition can now be seen to have been a watershed event in MOMA's own history as a museum. It marked the end of the old MOMA and the beginning of the new. The galleries were

emptied of every item in its collections that did not bear directly on this mammoth show. A new system of admission by advance reservation was devised, a new traffic pattern was designed for handling the crowds, and an augmented publicity department was created to insure that the crowds would keep coming. Whether by accident or intention, the Picasso retrospective proved to be a trial run for the operation of the new MOMA, and central to its success was the public that turned out for this exhibition—a public so eager not to miss out on what became the media event of the season, and of many a season, that it was willing to put up with almost any discomfort or distraction (and there were many!) in order to have been there. Those who said at the time that MOMA would never recover from this assault turned out, in some sense, to have been right. The new MOMA was born the day this exhibition opened its doors to the waiting throng.

It would not be quite correct, I think, to suggest that blockbuster exhibitions of this sort have converted the museums that embrace them into agencies of mass culture, for something less easily categorized—a cultural development that has not yet been defined or described—resulted from this planned introduction of huge new crowds into museums thitherto largely devoid of them. But if the blockbuster exhibition did not transform the museum into a branch of mass culture, it nonetheless brought us a fairly radical change in the museum-going public. It created, in effect, a new public which, while lacking both the knowledge and the sensibility to be found in the elite art public, must all the same be differentiated from the mass public that seeks its principal cultural gratifications in television and other commercial entertainments, professional sports events, and similar mass-market enterprises, and takes no interest whatever in the experience of high art.

Nor would it be correct to characterize this new public as middlebrow. The middlebrow public of yesteryear, with its perfect confidence in its own philistine taste and

its indifference, if not outright hostility, to avant-garde culture, has pretty much ceased to exist—a casualty, perhaps, of the death of the avant-garde itself and the absorption of so many of its characteristic attitudes by the institutions (the academy, the mass media, et al.) which once served as a kind of support-system for middlebrow taste. In contrast to the old middlebrows, the new public I speak of is anything but confident of its taste. In a sense that I do not mean to be invidious but merely descriptive, this public may even be said to have no taste—none, anyway, where art is concerned—but to be possessed instead of a keen appetite for whatever modes of cultural experience are persuasively and conspicuously commended to its attention.

That exhibitions of high art now constitute one of these modes—and a very important one, too, to judge by the attendance figures—is, of course, a matter of considerable interest, and it would be nice to know what accounts for it. Is it to be explained—as I suspect—by the fact that art exhibitions do not necessarily require any sustained effort of cerebration in order to be enjoyed at some level of pleasure or, for that matter, demand the kind of protracted intellectual attention in real time we are obliged to give to books or even plays of comparable seriousness if we are to derive any satisfaction from them at all? Is the explanation to be found, in other words, in the decline of literacy among the so-called “educated” classes? A dismaying thought. But however we attempt to explain this phenomenon, the phenomenon itself is an important new factor in the museum world, and the pressure it now exerts on that world is enormous.

Its influence certainly makes itself felt in the very look and atmosphere of the new MOMA. We are made to feel it straightaway in the enormous lobby area and in the computerized checkroom, and then most conspicuously in the so-called Garden Hall, the vast atrium-like, glass-enclosed space that now rises on the north side of the museum to its topmost story and has the effect of re-orienting the entire building away from

the West Fifty-third Street entrance and toward the Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Sculpture Garden and the neighborhood of West Fifty-fourth Street. This dazzling, light-filled space, with its elegant banks of escalators, its spacious halls, its busy display of structural detail (itself a visual experience of considerable interest), and its dramatic views, is now the museum's main traffic artery. Interestingly, it is also the new MOMA's principal architectural signature—its most expressive identifying image.

It is therefore of some significance that it is a space remarkably inhospitable to the exhibition of works of art. There are works of art displayed there, of course, and some very important ones, too—among them, Umberto Boccioni's *The City Rises* (1910), Francis Picabia's *Dances at the Spring* (1912), and Joan Miró's *Mural Painting* (1950-51), on the second floor; and large-scale works by Helen Frankenthaler and Frank Stella on the third floor. Yet most of the art on display in the Garden Hall wages a losing battle against atrocious visual circumstance. Owing to the unremitting volume and intensity of the circumambient light, even sculptures as powerful as Gaston Lachaise's *Floating Figure* (1927) and Alberto Giacometti's *Large Head* (1960) are reduced to silhouettes; and because of the overwhelming scale of the space in the Garden Hall, the paintings—though no doubt selected on the basis of size (and the fact that size precluded their installation in the neighboring interior galleries)—tend to be sadly diminished. The result is not uniform, to be sure. With their bold forms and intense color, the Frankenthaler painting and the Stella construction manage to survive, if only barely, this diminishing effect. But Boccioni's *The City Rises*, one of the classics of Futurist painting (though a heavily restored one), is simply wiped out by it, and there is not a single object on display in the Garden Hall that gains anything by being shown there.

The truth is, as a space in which to exhibit works of art—at least of the kind that have been placed there for the inauguration of the new MOMA—the Garden Hall is irre-

deemably makeshift, irrational, and unrewarding. But it is not, of course, the primary function of this space to serve as an exhibition area. Exhibiting works of art there is clearly a secondary consideration, if not indeed an afterthought. The real purpose of this space is to provide a place where crowds can gather and take their ease without having to be in any way concerned with the works of art they have ostensibly come to the museum to look at. For that purpose the Garden Hall is suitably commodious and very entertaining. It is sheer spectacle and gives the visitor a lot to look at when he doesn't want to look at art.

In some respects—especially in the cityscape views it provides—the Garden Hall resembles the glassed-in hallways of the upper floors of the Pompidou Center in Paris, but it also calls to mind the great hall of the East Building of the National Gallery of Art in Washington. Both, of course, are pioneer examples of blockbuster-inspired museum design, and one has the impression that they have been carefully studied. If so, it must be said that some of the less appealing features of these buildings have not been avoided in the design of the new MOMA. On the contrary, they seem to have been emulated. The Garden Hall is an infinitely more elegant and refined space than anything to be found at the Pompidou Center, but the very purpose which the Garden Hall serves guarantees that the irksome sense of bustle and commotion which can nowadays make a visit to the Pompidou Center such a ghastly experience—ghastly, that is, for anyone seriously interested in art—will be pervasive here as well. As for the great hall of the East Building of the National Gallery, it has proved from the outset to be a great space for crowds but an abysmal one in which to show works of art. The exhibitions which the National Gallery devoted to the works of Auguste Rodin and David Smith proved this unfortunate point beyond dispute, and it looks very much as if the Garden Hall—whatever its felicities as a design experience—is going to prove equally resistant to the museum's basic artistic purposes.

MARSDEN HARTLEY



O'Bitter Madrigal, 1942. Drawing, 28 x 22 inches. Hartley Estate no. 392.

BABCOCK GALLERIES

20 EAST 67 NEW YORK
ESTABLISHED 1852

BY APPOINTMENT TELEPHONE (212) 535-9355

GEORG BASELITZ
JEAN-MICHEL BASQUIAT
TROY BRAUNTUCH
FRANCESCO CLEMENTE
ERIC FISCHL
JORG IMMENDORFF
PER KIRKEBY
MARKUS LUPERTZ
A.R. PENCK
SIGMAR POLKE
DAVID SALLE
JULIAN SCHNABEL
GARY STEPHAN

M A R Y B O O N E
M I C H A E L W E R N E R
GALLERY 417 WEST BROADWAY NEW YORK

II. Choosing a façade

Creating an architectural structure that would be perfectly consistent with MOMA's artistic purposes—a building that would reflect in all respects its special artistic mission while at the same time serving its practical needs—is a familiar problem for the museum. It has bedeviled MOMA for nearly fifty years—since 1936, in fact, when its founding director, the late Alfred H. Barr, Jr., and MOMA's trustees and benefactors set about the task of selecting an architect to design the museum's original building at 11 West Fifty-third Street. In the resolution of that distant episode we are given the first chapter of the curious history that has now been concluded in the new MOMA of 1984.

It was Alfred Barr's hope in 1936 to be able to engage the services of one of the great architects of the modern movement for this important commission. Since its opening in 1929, the museum had occupied temporary quarters in existing buildings—first in the Heckscher Building at Fifth Avenue and Fifty-seventh Street and then, from 1932, in the townhouse at 11 West Fifty-third Street. During this period the museum had made the cause of modern architecture one of its principal concerns—its historic survey, “Modern Architecture: International Exhibition,” was organized in 1932, the year the Department of Architecture was established—and it was therefore to be expected that when the time came for MOMA to put up a building of its own, the commission would go to one of the figures it had already singled out as modern masters. Barr's own choices were three: Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, Walter Gropius, and J.J.P. Oud, a Dutch architect associated with the avant-garde De Stijl group. Mies was clearly the director's first choice. In a letter, written in July 1936, to Mrs. John D. (Abby Aldrich) Rockefeller, Jr., who had supplied the funds for purchasing the land on which the museum was to be built, Barr referred to Mies as “the man who is possibly the world's finest architect.” And in another

letter that month—this one to A. Conger Goodyear, the museum president—Barr left little doubt about what the selection of an architect would mean (as he saw it) for the museum itself. “The Museum, presumably, stands for the best,” he wrote, “not only in the art of our time but in architecture, too. I cannot but feel that if we took a second best, or, what is just as likely, a fifth best we would be betraying the standards of the Museum in general and in particular the standards which it has upheld in architecture.” To Mrs. Rockefeller, Barr stated the matter in even stronger terms: “To rest content with a mediocre building on such a site would be to betray the very purposes for which the Museum was founded as well as to make a laughing stock of the Museum's five years' work in the cause of the best modern architecture.”¹

Barr, as we know, lost this battle. The ideal museum that he envisioned in 1936—a museum that would embody in the very concept of its design the exalted standards which MOMA, under his direction, upheld in its architectural exhibition and publications program—was never built. The commission went instead to two Americans—Philip L. Goodwin and Edward Durrell Stone. Goodwin, though a MOMA trustee and a collector of modern painting and sculpture, was about as far from being a modernist as an architect could be in 1936. Russell Lynes, in *Good Old Modern*, described him as “an architect with the eclectic tastes of the Edwardian era and his roots . . . in the neo-classicism of the Paris Ecole des Beaux Arts.” Stone was a young, undistinguished convert to modernism who happened to be in the employ of Wallace K. Harrison, the architect of Rockefeller Center. Barr had warned Mrs. Rockefeller that awarding the commission to Goodwin and Stone “will almost certainly result in a medi-

1 See “1936: The Museum Selects an Architect. Excerpts from the Barr Papers of the Museum of Modern Art,” by Rona Roob: *Archives of American Art Journal*, Volume 23, Number 1 (1983), pages 22-30.

ocre building,” but the trustees were adamant. Even the last-ditch effort made by Barr to keep up the appearance of architectural virtue by allowing Mies to design the facade of the Goodwin-Stone building—a curious idea in itself, but a prophetic one, as it turned out—came to nothing.

There are several things to be observed about this fateful episode, and all of them have a bearing on the architectural character of the new MOMA. One is that the trustees’ decision to settle for a “safe” solution in 1936 led to a fundamental split in MOMA’s architectural policies—a split that, from the Thirties down to the present day, has separated the ideas put forward in the museum’s architectural exhibition and publications program from those put into practice in the museum’s own building program. It is a split, moreover, that is now likely to remain permanent. But another thing to be observed about this decision is that it did not result in the predicted disaster. It may even have been responsible for averting one. We cannot know, of course, exactly what sort of building Mies would have designed for MOMA in the Thirties. What we do know is that the two most conspicuous museum facilities which Mies was given the opportunity to design in later years—the Brown Pavilion addition to the Museum of Fine Arts in Houston and the National Gallery in West Berlin—have proved, as spaces in which to exhibit works of art for public viewing, to be among the very worst on the international museum scene.²

Glass-box architecture—as the Miesian mode has come to be called—is nowadays unduly maligned, in my opinion, for at its best it is surely one of the great artistic achievements of the modern age, and as the basis of skyscraper design it remains, more often than not, vastly superior to the gimcrack postmodernist architecture which has lately supplanted it. But this is not to say that the aesthetic attributes of the Miesian mode easily lend themselves to every architectural function, and we now know that as museum design it is all but guaranteed to be utterly dysfunctional. So it was undoubtedly

a lucky stroke for the museum that Alfred Barr lost his battle to have Mies design the original MOMA building in the Thirties. I would go further and say that it was a lucky stroke for Barr himself—which is to say, for the kind of museum that he went on to create in the building he was finally given. Barr was the greatest museum director of his time, and much that we have reason to cherish in the new MOMA as well as in the old we owe to his vision and his judgment and to the courage and tenacity with which he pursued his goals. But it does no honor to his achievement to pretend that he was always equally wise in all matters of museum policy, and on the architectural question he was clearly wrong. I think I know why he was wrong, too, for the reason goes to the very heart of Alfred Barr’s conception of what kind of museum he wanted MOMA to be in the earliest stages of its development.

This subject will be discussed in due course—for it is central to our understanding of what sort of museum MOMA has become in our time. For the moment, however, there is still a further and final observation to be made about that architec-

2 William S. Rubin, the present director of MOMA’s Department of Painting and Sculpture and Alfred Barr’s successor in that department, recently offered his own view of this matter. In an interview in *ARTnews* (May 1984), Mr. Rubin spoke as follows on the question of Mies and museum design:

“A lot of museums got built by architects who are more interested in their own creation of an interesting architectural space than in a space right for paintings. The *ne plus ultra* of this is Mies van der Rohe’s museum in Berlin, where the entire main floor is useless. They’ve had to turn it into a lobby and carve out a museum below grade, which is where you see the collection. But you come into this immense, meaningless space. There’s nothing that could survive in that space. They’ve put in a few giant sculptures, but it’s a totally useless space, as was the upper terrace in our old garden.

“Museum people have to watch out for architects. The better they are, the worse they are, in the sense that the more powerful their vision, the less they are likely to consider the needs of paintings.”

Lincoln Perry **William Zingaro** Joan Brady Irene Buszko James Childs
 James Cook **William Clutz** Richard Crozier Jillian Denby David Dewey
Joellyn Duesberry Kathryn Freeman Sheila Gardner John Gordon
 Theophil Groell George Harkins John Stuart Ingle **Simeon Lagodich**
 Seaver Leslie Tomar Levine Thomas Newbolt Lincoln Perry William
 Zingaro Joan Brady **Irene Buszko** James Childs James Cook William
 Clutz Richard Crozier Jillian Denby David Dewey Joellyn Duesberry
 Kathryn Freeman Sheila Gardner John Gordon Theophil Groell George
 Harkins John Stuart Ingle Simeon Lagodich Seaver Leslie **Tomar Levine**
 Thomas Newbolt Lincoln Perry William Zingaro Joan Brady Irene Buszko
 James Childs James Cook William Clutz Richard Crozier Jillian Denby
 David Dewey Joellyn Duesberry **Kathryn Freeman** Sheila Gardner John
 Gordon Theophil Groell George Harkins John Stuart Ingle Simeon
 Lagodich **Seaver Leslie** Tomar Levine Thomas Newbolt Lincoln Perry
 William Zingaro Joan Brady Irene Buszko **James Childs** James Cook
 William Clutz Richard Crozier Jillian Denby David Dewey Joellyn
 Duesberry Kathryn Freeman Sheila Gardner John Gordon Theophil
 Groell George Harkins **John Stuart Ingle** Simeon Lagodich Seaver Leslie
 Tomar Levine Thomas Newbolt Lincoln Perry William Zingaro Joan
 Brady Irene Buszko James Childs **James Cook** William Clutz Richard
 Crozier Jillian Denby David Dewey Joellyn Duesberry Kathryn Freeman
Sheila Gardner John Gordon Theophil Groell George Harkins John
 Stuart Ingle Simeon Lagodich Seaver Leslie Tomar Levine Thomas
 Newbolt Lincoln Perry William Zingaro Joan Brady Irene Buszko James
 Childs James Cook **William Clutz** Richard Crozier Jillian Denby David
 Dewey Joellyn Duesberry Kathryn Freeman Sheila Gardner John Gordon
Theophil Groell George Harkins John Stuart Ingle Simeon Lagodich
 Seaver Leslie Tomar Levine Thomas Newbolt Lincoln Perry William
 Zingaro Joan Brady Irene Buszko James Childs James Cook William
 Clutz **Richard Crozier** Jillian Denby David Dewey Joellyn Duesberry
 Kathryn Freeman Sheila Gardner **John Gordon** Theophil Groell George
 Harkins John Stuart Ingle Simeon Lagodich Seaver Leslie Tomar Levine
 Thomas Newbolt Lincoln Perry William Zingaro Joan Brady Irene Buszko
 James Childs James Cook William Clutz Richard Crozier **Jillian Denby**
 David Dewey Joellyn Duesberry Kathryn Freeman Sheila Gardner John
 Gordon Theophil Groell George Harkins John Stuart Ingle Simeon
 Lagodich Seaver Leslie Tomar Levine **Thomas Newbolt** Lincoln Perry
 William Zingaro **Joan Brady** Irene Buszko James Childs James Cook
 William Clutz Richard Crozier Jillian Denby David Dewey Joellyn
 Duesberry Kathryn Freeman Sheila Gardner John Gordon Theophil
 Groell **George Harkins** John Stuart Ingle Simeon Lagodich Seaver Leslie
 Tomar Levine Thomas Newbolt **Lincoln Perry** William Zingaro Joan
 Brady Irene Buszko James Childs James Cook William Clutz Richard
 Crozier Jillian Denby **David Dewey** Joellyn Duesberry Kathryn Freeman

TATISTCHEFF
TATISTCHEFF

50 WEST 57 ST. • NEW YORK 10019 • (212) 664-0907

STEGEL

CONTEMPORARY ART

24 WEST 57 STREET, NYC 10019 (212) 586-0605

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

1983-1984 SEASON

Daisy Craddock
David Craven
Joseph Di Giorgio
Trudi Frank
Douglas Higgins
Judith Hudson
David James
Robert Jessup
Terence LaNoue
Rex Lau
Diane Mayo
Dennis Nechvatal
Maria Scotti
George Stave
Lester Van Winkle
Idelle Weber

1984-1985 SEASON

Anne Abrons
Robert Berlind
Biff Elrod
Paul Kane
Mark Kloth
Terence LaNoue
Rex Lau
Sam Messer
Charles Munch
Robert Pittenger
Riduan Tomkins
Tony W.H. Wong
Chihung Yang
Jerry Zeniuk

tural decision in 1936 and its relation to the present. Barr lost out in his final plea to have Mies design the façade of the original MOMA building. With the new MOMA of 1984, alas, we have not been quite so lucky. For in the multi-storied, glass-enclosed Garden Hall which Cesar Pelli, the architect of the new MOMA, has now made its most conspicuous design feature, the museum has at long last achieved its (more or less) Miesian façade. And chances are that it is a far grander façade, though also one that is far more *élaboré* in its dramatic display of structural detail, than any that MOMA would have gotten in the Thirties. But is this the right style for the museum even today? There is certainly reason to doubt it. The fact that the Garden Hall is in many respects a very beautiful space—and just the kind of modern, light-filled space that Barr had no doubt envisioned for the museum in its original building—does not alter its almost total uselessness for showing works of art to the public. Nor does the beauty of the Garden Hall alter the irony of its belatedness as architectural history: precisely the kind of belatedness, by the way, that would be likely to exclude it from any future MOMA survey of distinguished architectural design.

It must be said that the task which confronted Cesar Pelli in designing the new MOMA was decidedly more complicated and unwieldy than any in the recent history of museum building. The new MOMA was never intended to be an entirely new building, and of course it isn't. Certain elements of the old Goodwin-Stone building as well as the addition of the garden wing designed by Philip Johnson in 1964 had somehow to be preserved and harmoniously integrated into the new museum, however much they might be modified in the resulting structure. At the same time, the museum's elegant, open-air sculpture garden—probably the most beloved open space of its kind in New York City—had likewise to be preserved and protected from the potentially overpowering contrast of the new fifty-two-story Museum Tower, the luxury apartment house that now rises above the west wing of the

museum as a sort of admonitory symbol of MOMA's farewell to visionary urbanism. And dominating all these considerations were two others: the all but absolute authority given (and properly given) to the museum's chief curators to control—and thus, in effect, to design—their own exhibition galleries; and the need to provide ample, non-viewing space for the museum's huge new public. Such an assignment could not have been expected to yield a completely coherent architectural structure; still less was it likely to inspire a great architectural idea. It is no wonder, then, that the new MOMA is not exactly an architectural masterpiece. The real wonder is that, given the circumstances and conditions to be met, it is as fine as it is, and that what is now the museum's primary function—to exhibit as extensively and as intelligently as possible the masterworks from its own permanent collections—is so beautifully served. One somehow doubts that a building which really was an architectural masterpiece would have served the museum nearly as well.

III. The Louvre of modernism

"The Louvre," wrote Cézanne, "is the book in which we learn to read." For a great many artists, as for a great many art critics, scholars, collectors, curators, and dealers, and for its ever-expanding public, too, MOMA has long been the principal "book" in which we have learned to "read" the history of modern art. It has in this sense come closer than any other institution in the world to serving as the Louvre of modernism, and it is in this spirit that the installation of the permanent collections has been carried out in the new MOMA.

By and large, and despite some important flaws and failures to be noted, the execution of this formidable task has proved to be a triumph. At least this is the case for the installation of the European masters of painting and sculpture on the second floor of the museum, and for the departments devoted to drawings and to prints and illus-

JAKOB WEIDEMANN

Recent Paintings

Through June

**The GRUENEBAUM GALLERY
38 E 57 Street
New York, New York 10022
212-838-8245**

trated books on the third floor. Far more problematical are the galleries largely but not exclusively devoted to American painting and sculpture on the third floor, and the new installation of the outdoor sculpture garden. As for the Department of Photography on the second floor and the Department of Architecture and Design on the fourth, these—like the Department of Film which now presides over two movie theaters in the lower levels of the building—tend more than ever to address us as virtually separate museums, independent entities with standards, agendas, and historical perspectives that differ in important respects from those of the Painting and Sculpture, the Drawings, and the Prints and Illustrated Books departments as well as from each other.

It is, in any case, of the permanent collection of painting and sculpture that I wish mainly to speak here. Mounted at the entrance to the second-floor galleries housing the European masters is a quotation from Alfred Barr—in whose memory, appropriately, these galleries are named—which alludes to “the conscientious, continuous, resolute distinction of quality from mediocrity,” and it is clearly in this spirit of uncompromising connoisseurship that William S. Rubin, the curator responsible for this department, has carried out his task. We enter the first gallery in this series directly from the Garden Hall, of course, and the shift in scale, in feeling, in the density of light that surrounds us, and in the kind of demand that is made on our faculties is abrupt and startling. We have left the anonymous, over-scale pretensions of late twentieth-century modernism for the most intimate, profoundly inward art of the late nineteenth century—Cézanne’s. It is like crossing to another civilization.

Now it is a more distant civilization, too. When the museum was founded in 1929, Cézanne had been dead for less than a quarter of a century. Monet had been dead for only three years, Degas for twelve. In 1984 an entire century separates us from Cézanne’s *The Bather* (1885-90), which hangs in the first gallery of the permanent collection

—the same amount of time that separates the Cézanne from David’s *Oath of the Horatii* (1784). Clearly we are in another period, not only chronologically but culturally. Yet in commencing its survey of modern painting with Cézanne, along with certain other Post-Impressionist masters in the adjacent galleries, the new MOMA has remained faithful—and properly so, I think—to the historical outlook of the old. It was with an exhibition of Cézanne, Seurat, Gauguin, and van Gogh that the museum opened its doors fifty-five years ago. This is not, to be sure, the only way to chart the history of modern painting, but the alternatives are to locate its origins even earlier—in the work of Courbet or Manet or the Impressionists—and not any later. And there is a strong case to be made for beginning such a survey with Cézanne and the major Post-Impressionists. It was directly from their work, after all, that the most radical art movements of our own century—Fauvism, Expressionism, Cubism, and the abstract art that derived from them—drew their inspiration. It was never a practical proposition for MOMA to become a full-scale museum of nineteenth-century art, in any case. Even when it joined in the general rediscovery of Monet in the Fifties and early Sixties, it was the artist’s late work—which belongs to the twentieth century in scale and spirit as well as chronologically—that was acquired for the permanent collection.

It is, then, as a prologue to the mainstream of twentieth-century modernism that these initial galleries devoted to Cézanne and his contemporaries have been planned. The art is magnificent, of course, and the galleries, with their discreet proportions, easy lighting, and unobtrusive décor—white walls and gray carpeting—are altogether agreeable. Except for one minor but irritating detail—the mistaken decision to put every picture into a uniform gold frame of innocuous design—we feel ourselves on solid ground. The ambiance is at once grave and pleasurable.

As we proceed on our course, moreover, we discover some important and delightful acquisitions which have lately been added to

the collection—among them, Seurat's *The English Channel at Grandcamp* (1885), Signac's *Portrait of Félix Fénéon* (1890), Matisse's *La Japonaise (Mme Matisse)* (1905), and Bonnard's *Basket of Fruit Reflected in a Mirror* (1946). But there are some real disappointments, too. Years ago it was Alfred Barr's habit to hang Maurice Prendergast's wonderful *Acadia* (1922) in the same gallery with Vuillard's *Mother and Sister* (circa 1893) and Bonnard's *The Breakfast Room* (circa 1930-31). It was unusual, even then, for MOMA to accord an American painting of that period such a distinctive place in the permanent collection, but it was fully justified by the superb quality of the picture. Alas, the Prendergast was removed from this sympathetic company in the Sixties when Mr. Rubin reinstalled the permanent collection in the old MOMA. It was then placed in a sort of crowded ghetto reserved for some early American modernists. This time around, though others among the early American modernists are once again consigned to a small, crowded isolation ward on the third floor, *Acadia* has disappeared from view altogether—and by this observer, at least, it is keenly missed. But then, as we shall see, there is something definitely askew about the handling of all American art prior to 1940 in the new MOMA.

It isn't as if every recent addition to the European painting collection is an undoubted masterpiece, either. Neither the new Klimt—*Hope II* (1907-8)—nor the new Schiele painting—*Portrait of Gerta Schiele* (1909)—can be claimed to represent either artist at his best. (Unlike the 1911 Schiele watercolor, *Girl with Black Hair*, which is first-rate, or the 1910 Klimt landscape, *The Park*, which has been in the collection for some years.) In this matter, I am afraid that Mr. Rubin has allowed the academic art historian, with his compulsion to fill in "gaps" left vacant by his predecessors, to overrule the connoisseur for whom the quality of the specific object is the primary consideration. No doubt it was unfortunate for the museum to have overlooked figure paintings by Klimt and Schiele when some real masterpieces

were still readily available, but that time has apparently passed. What is disturbing about all this is that Prendergast's *Acadia* is a far better painting than Klimt's *Hope II*, but so-called "gaps" in American art prior to 1940 are now of very little concern to the museum.

There are other problems as well. The most surprising is to be found in the new installation of Picasso's *Les Femmes d'Alger (O. J.)* (1907), one of the most important pictures in the entire collection. There are few living souls who have studied Picasso's work more closely than Mr. Rubin, and fewer still who know more about it. Yet something has gone wrong with the installation of *Les Femmes d'Alger* in the new MOMA. It is crammed into a shallow space that is partially obstructed by an extremely infelicitous temporary wall supporting a slightly earlier picture—Picasso's gentler and more realistic *Boy Leading a Horse* (1905-6). The point, I gather—it is anything but subtle—is to drive home to us the enormous leap that *Les Femmes d'Alger* represents not only in Picasso's development but in all of modern painting. Yet the actual effect of this heavy-handed juxtaposition is to diminish the painting's impact, something I would not have thought possible until now. The picture should strike us—as it struck the artist's contemporaries when they first saw it, and as it has struck subsequent generations ever since—like a thunderbolt; but here it is reduced to a lesson in art history. It doesn't help matters, either, that another key picture of the period—Picasso's *Two Nudes* (1906)—is virtually hidden away on the reverse side of the ugly wall supporting the *Boy Leading a Horse*. This is, perhaps, the most glaring example in the entire installation of the permanent collection of a tendency to allow the mentality of the seminar room to triumph over museological judgment—to allow art history, in other words, to triumph over aesthetics.

Notwithstanding such disappointments—and there are others to be noted—there is something at once magisterial and deeply pondered about the installation of the European masters, and one is continually made

to marvel at the sheer quality and scope of the collection itself. As was to be expected, much space and attention have been lavished on the achievements of Picasso and Matisse, MOMA's reigning deities. There is surely no other museum in the world where these artists are represented on anything like the same scale or at anything approaching the same depth. The vast Matisse gallery—the single largest space devoted to the work of a single artist, and one of the few that enjoy the benefit of some natural light—is the greatest thing of its kind that I know of. It amply confirms Matisse's place as the pre-eminent painter of the century and as one of its greatest sculptors, too. This is one of the galleries in the new MOMA where one feels most inclined to linger, and it was therefore a happy idea for the museum to equip the gallery with a comfortable place to sit. Matisse is the only artist in the collection who is accorded this amenity.

The largest of the several Picasso installations—a huge gallery mainly devoted to work of the Thirties and Forties—does not have quite the same power, however. The main reason for this lies entirely beyond the museum's control, of course. *Guernica* (1937) and its many preparatory studies, long the centerpiece in MOMA's display of Picasso's work of the Thirties, were never part of the permanent collection. They had been placed on long-term loan by Picasso himself at the beginning of the Second World War, and they now repose (as the artist wished) at the Prado in Madrid. In preparation for this loss, MOMA some years ago acquired *The Charnel House* (1944-45), a later and smaller picture similar in theme and style. But this picture, though haunting in its imagery of death and destruction, is more an epilogue to *Guernica* than a substitute for it, and the largest of the paintings of the Thirties—the rather benign, oversize *Night Fishing at Antibes* (1939)—just doesn't bear comparison with the artist's strongest work. (Ironically, it is given the kind of installation that *Les Femmes d'Alger* is denied.) On the other hand, the recent acquisition of one of the great plaster heads of

the Thirties—the *Head of a Woman* (1932) that now dominates the gallery devoted to this period—is a marvelous addition to an already superb collection of Picasso sculpture.

There is one further criticism to be made of this Picasso gallery, and that is the way the sculptor Julio González has been assigned to this space and thus made to seem a mere appendage to Picasso's career. González owed much to Picasso's example, to be sure, but once the former was launched on the course that led him to create his masterpieces of open-form, welded-metal sculpture in the Thirties, he proved to be one of the most original sculptors of his time—and an immensely influential one, too. He should be treated like one.

Two other sculptors—Brancusi and Giacometti—have fared very much better. Our first glimpse of the Brancusi installation gives us indeed one of the truly sublime moments in our visit to the new MOMA, and return visits in no way diminish its impact. The museum has long owned some of the best examples of Brancusi's work, and another important sculpture has lately been added—*Endless Column* (1918). Most of these sculptures are mounted on a raised platform, painted white, that isolates them from the space that we, as spectators, occupy, and this has the effect of enclosing them in an ideal world of their own and thereby underscoring their "perfect," otherworldly quality. This is a brilliant solution to a difficult problem.

So is the very different installation accorded Giacometti's work. With Giacometti, it is not distance and separation that the work calls for, but just the opposite. Its nervous, febrile, anguished imagery beckons us to draw near as it encloses us in a vision of great poignancy. There are more than a dozen of the artist's works displayed in a very small space—just the kind of confined space in which Giacometti himself liked to work—and this turns out to be exactly right. Each of the objects is distinctly legible, yet together they create a spiritual ambiance that is somehow larger than the sum of its parts. Giacometti had come to believe that

The new Museum of Modern Art

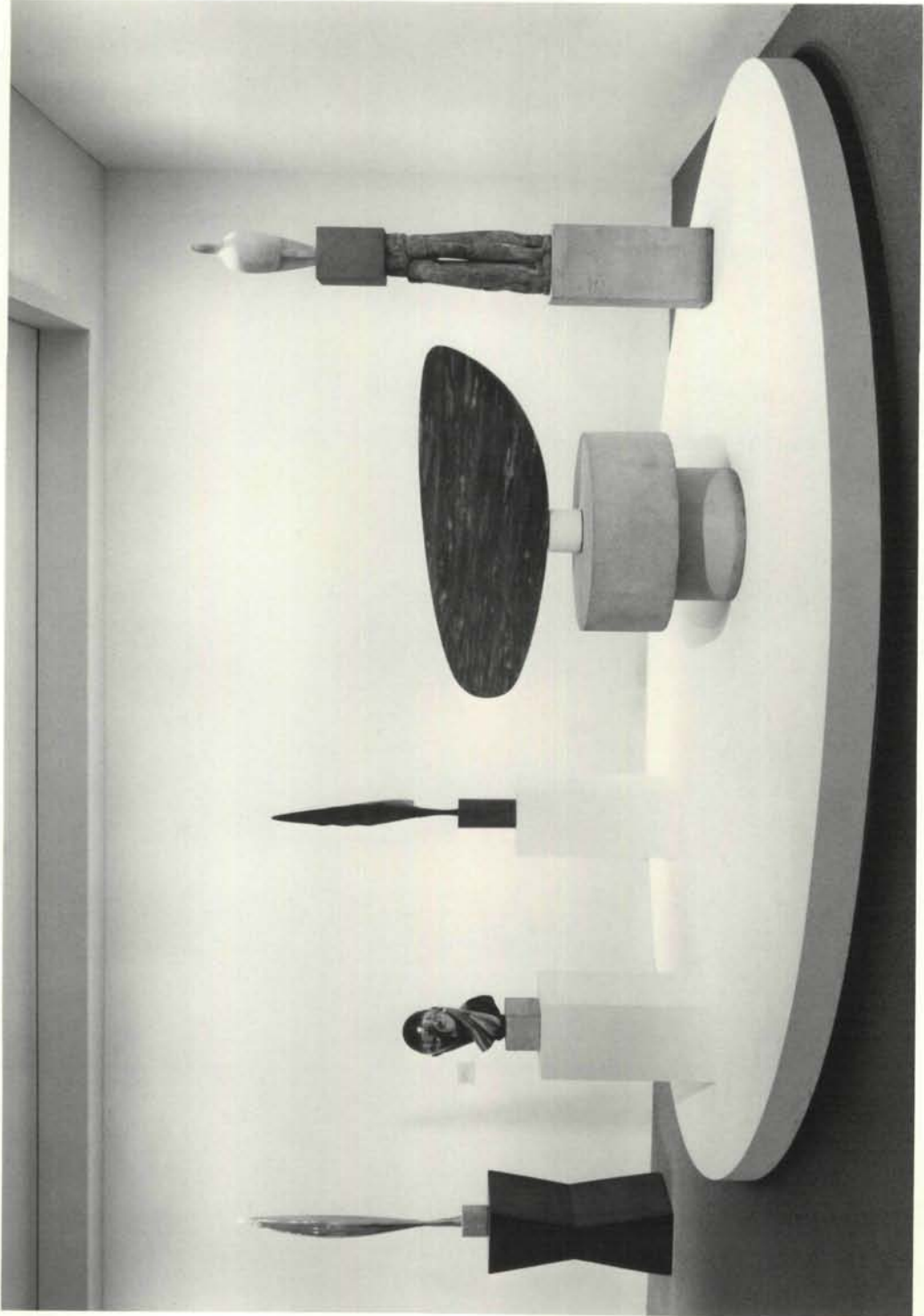
photographs by John T. Hill



The Garden Hall, looking east from the second floor (Cesar Pelli, architect)



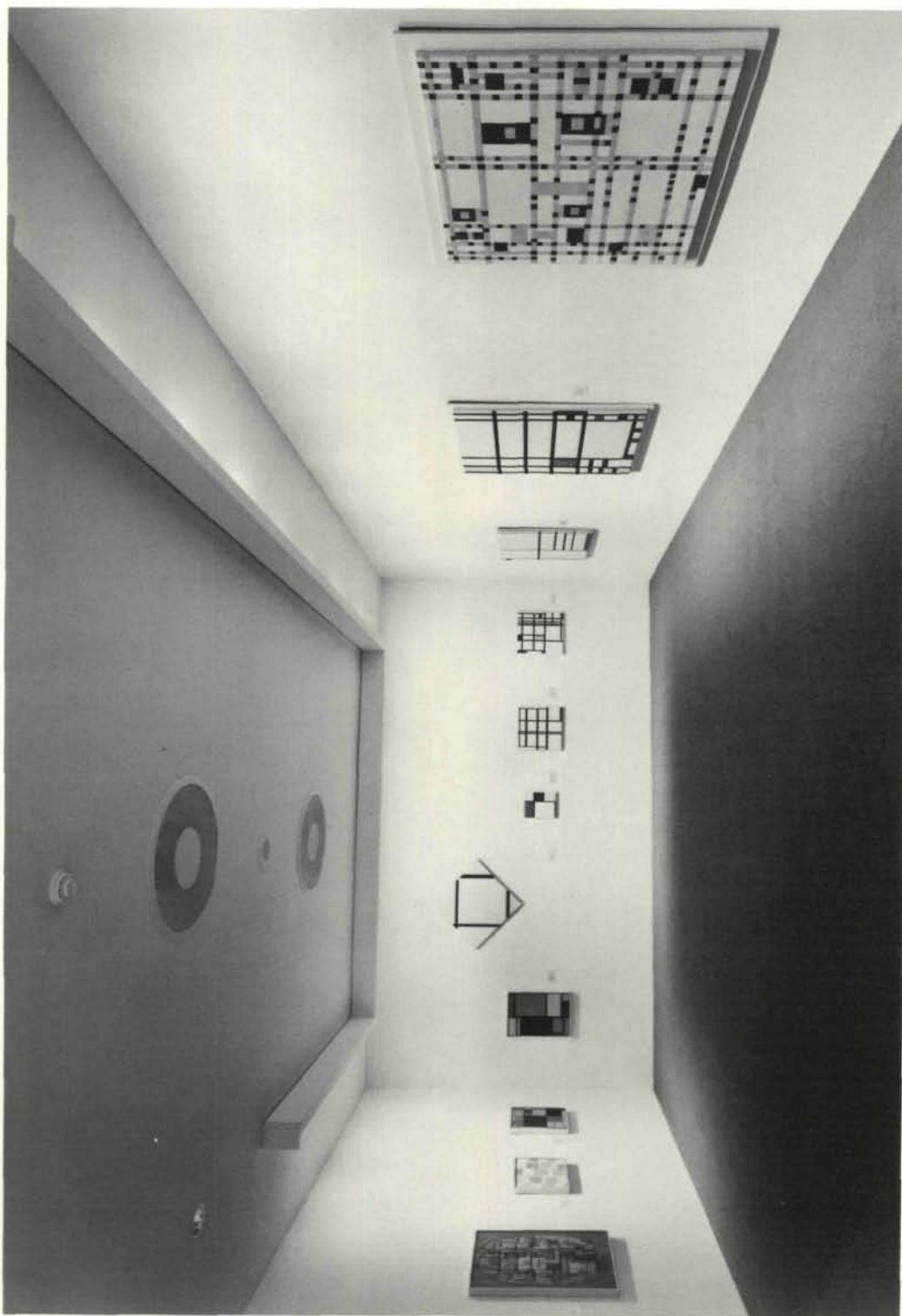
Picasso installation: Boy Leading a Horse, left; Les Femmes d'Alger (O. J.), center



Brancusi gallery



Expressionism: sculptures by Lehmbruck, double portrait by Kokoschka, with Chagall's I and the Village at right



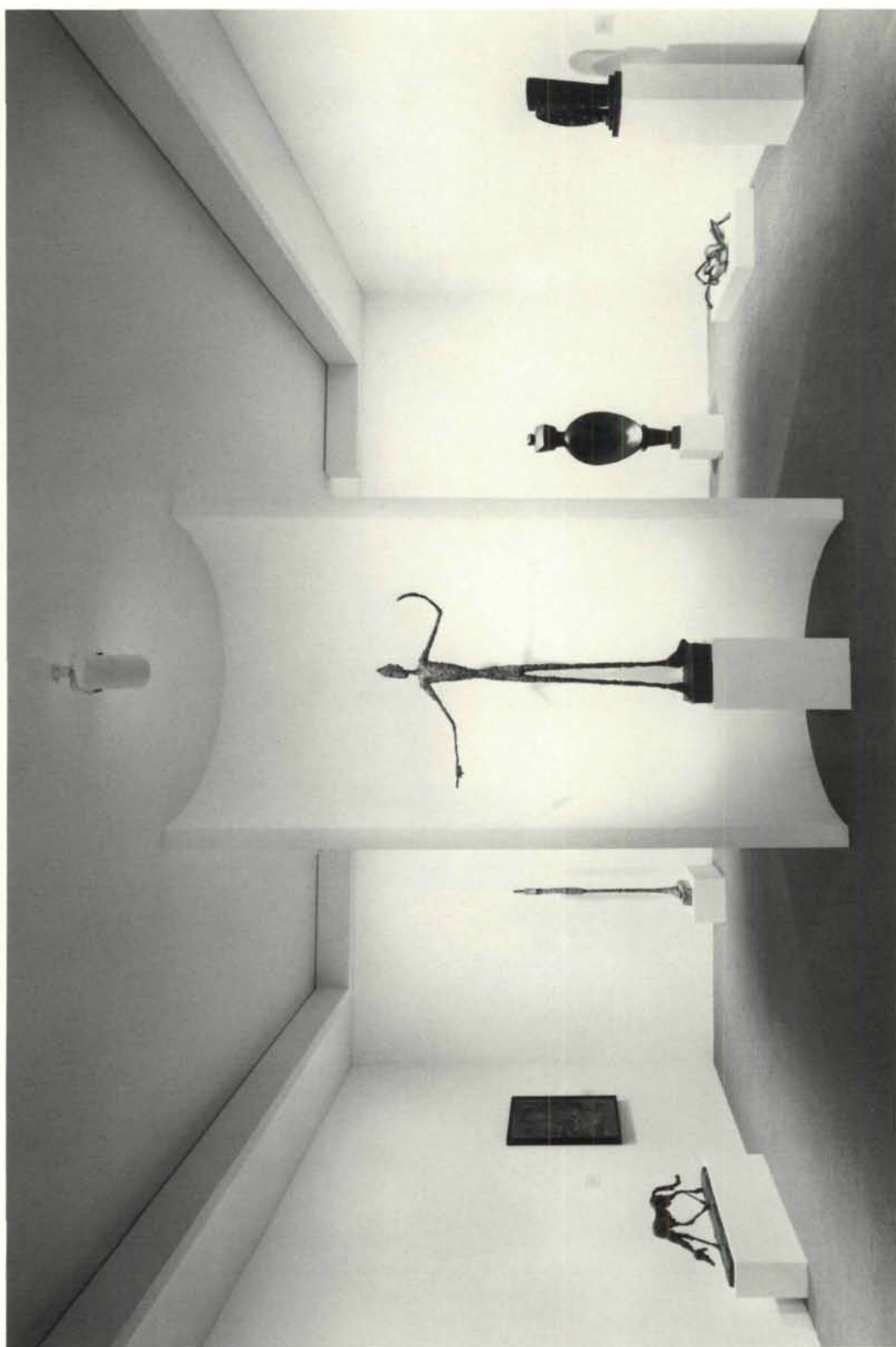
Mondrian gallery



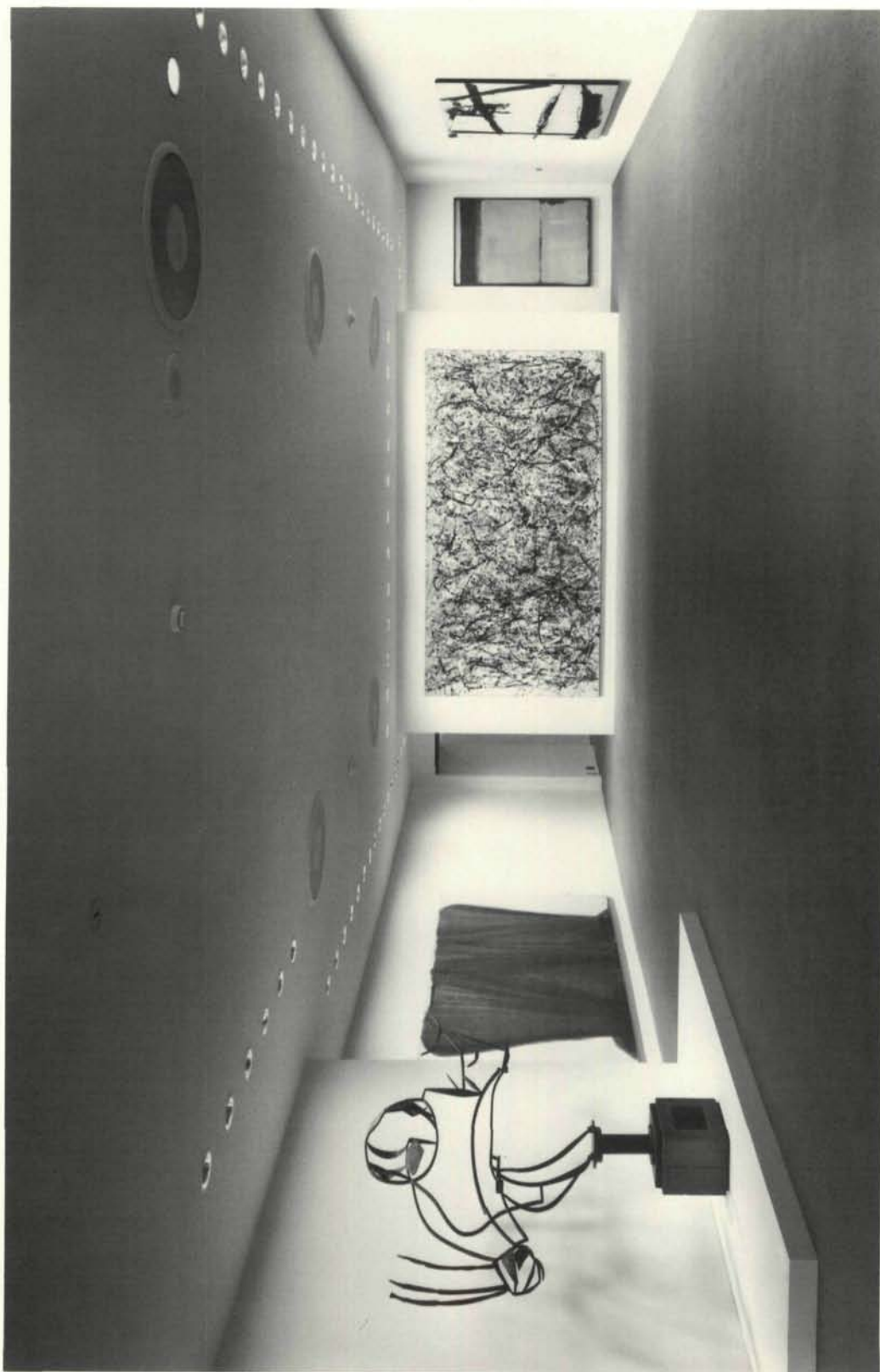
Matisse installation, with view of Kandinsky paintings



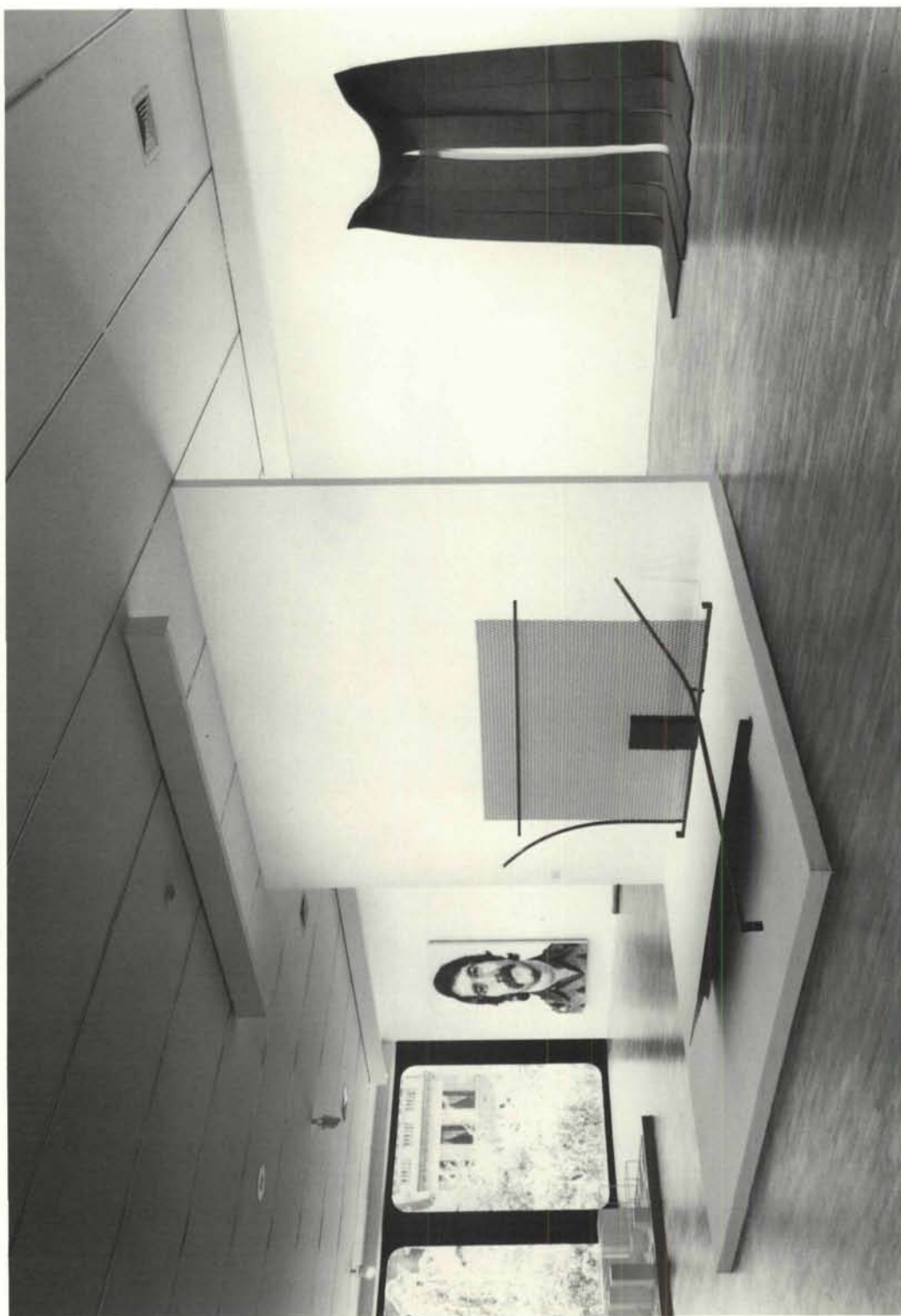
Picasso installation, with Head of a Woman in foreground and The Charnel House at right



Giacometti gallery



Abstract Expressionism: left to right, works by David Smith, Morris Louis, Jackson Pollock, Mark Rothko, and Franz Kline



Contemporary gallery: left to right, works by Sol LeWitt, Chuck Close, Anthony Caro, and Robert Morris



Entrance gallery, Department of Architecture and Design



The Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Sculpture Garden, with view of the Garden Hall and Museum Tower

he represented the end of a certain tradition in art, and in this installation we are made to feel that we have experienced a kind of coda in the history of a civilization. In this sense, too, it is remarkably faithful to the artist's vision.

Equally successful is the Mondrian gallery, an oasis of utopian order and purity compared to which almost every other installation and object in the museum—not to mention the world outside—looks woefully fussy and self-indulgent. This was certainly Mondrian's view of the matter, and the gallery devoted to his work is properly infused with that sense of the absolute which so completely governed his vision as an artist.

Distinctly less successful, if not indeed inept, is the treatment given to Expressionism. Has a decision been made to downgrade the entire Expressionist movement? It would seem so. Thus, no room has been found in the galleries devoted to the European masters for the greatest German painter of the century, who is also the culminating figure of the Expressionist movement—Max Beckmann. The magnificent triptych in the museum's collection—*Departure* (1932-35)—has been parked outside in the glaring light of the Garden Hall, but there is nothing by Beckmann to be found in the galleries. It does seem absurd for Chagall, for example, to be given so much space—wonderful as the museum's early Chagalls are—when Beckmann is given none, for there can be no question that Beckmann is the greater artist. (For that matter, even inferior talents like Tchelitchev and Delvaux are given a warmer welcome.) Still another picture that seems to have disappeared is Lovis Corinth's *Self-Portrait* (1924), a far stronger painting than the highly decorative Schiele portrait the museum has gone to so much trouble to acquire.

It was a mistake, too, I think, in the one gallery devoted to Expressionism, to arrange a sort of tableau in which Lehmbruck's two extraordinary sculptures—*Kneeling Woman* (1911) and *Standing Youth* (1913)—are made to form something like an honor guard for Kokoschka's haunting *Hans Tietze*

and *Erica-Tietze Conrat* (1909). Whereas the sculptures are heroic idealizations, the portrait is a picture of the most intense psychological analysis. Not only is there a disjunction in scale and subject matter—the sculptures representing youth and the portrait middle age—but these are works that inhabit totally different worlds of feeling, and only a taste utterly indifferent to the nuances of the Expressionist mode would lead one to think otherwise. Perhaps it was those elongated fingers, to be found in both the portrait and the sculptures, that inspired this unhappy juxtaposition, but even these serve very different artistic functions. Someday the entire subject of Expressionism is going to have to be reconsidered at the museum. Elsewhere in the art world it is a particularly hot subject just now, but word of this development does not seem to have reached the museum's Department of Painting and Sculpture.

Far more sympathetic and extensive are the installations devoted to Futurism, Dada, and Surrealism. The museum's fine de Chirico collection, which must surely be the best in the world, is given a gallery of its own, and while one feels a certain regret that a similar space could not be found for Miró, that great artist—in whose work MOMA has always taken a keen and perspicacious interest—is nonetheless well represented. So are (on another level of accomplishment) Dali and Magritte. As a result, the entire history of the European avant-garde from the Post-Impressionist period to that of the Surrealists is, except for the scanting of Expressionism, represented at a level of quality that is truly unrivaled.

IV. Revising the American century

It is interesting to note that in this admirable survey of the European avant-garde, which occupies the second-floor galleries devoted to painting and sculpture, only three American artists have been included: Alexander Calder, Man Ray, and Joseph Cornell. There can be no question, I think,

that they belong in this company, for their work is closely connected with that of their European contemporaries and represents a further and sometimes original development of ideas that came out of the European (mainly Parisian) avant-garde.

Yet the exclusion of so many other American artists from this second-floor survey, which ends (more or less) on the eve of the Second World War, alerts us to what is undoubtedly the most important art-historical revision to be seen in the new MOMA. This consists of a radical downgrading of the first four decades of American art in the twentieth century. There are some peculiar omissions even from the period after 1940, but it is in its handling, or rather its mishandling, of the early American modernists that MOMA has carried out its most categorical act of historical revisionism.

This is a matter that MOMA has never been entirely comfortable with. From the day it was founded in 1929, the museum has traced a very erratic course in its relations with modernist American art. In the Thirties, while it devoted much energy to exhibiting and acquiring examples of the European avant-garde (and properly so, in my opinion), the museum tended paradoxically to give priority to regionalist, neo-romantic, and realist painting whenever it turned its attention to the contemporary American scene. With rare exceptions, the American avant-garde was ignored and disparaged. Even in the Forties, when MOMA began for the first time to take cognizance of what was stirring in American art, its grasp of what was happening was uncertain and confused. Certain things were acquired for the collection and certain artists were shown, but there was no coherent policy. For MOMA, modern art was still, for the most part, something that happened in Europe.

Despite this uncertainty, the museum in Alfred Barr's day made a very deliberate effort to include American artists of the early modern period in its collections and in its exhibition program. Barr's perspective on all of modern art was a highly ecumenical one; in his commitment to a particular "school"

or style he was anything but sectarian. It is this broad-based, non-sectarian outlook that has now been modified into something rather more pointed and rigid.

It wasn't until 1951 that the museum organized an exhibition of "Abstract Painting and Sculpture in America," and thereafter, with such exhibitions as "Fifteen Americans" (1952) and "Twelve Americans" (1956), both organized by Dorothy Miller, and with shows devoted to Jackson Pollock (1956) and David Smith (1957), MOMA began shifting its course to give greater attention to "advanced" American art. The culminating event of this phase of its history came in 1959 with the exhibition of "The New American Painting"—the museum's first major survey of the Abstract Expressionists and the show that more or less established the New York School as a major turning point in the history of twentieth-century art.

Yet even in the Fifties, while this shift was occurring, there were other impulses at work. I vividly recall an evening at the Artists' Club in New York in 1954 when Alfred Barr predicted that in the next phase of American painting there would be a return to what he called "history painting." What he had in mind, obviously, was Larry Rivers's *Washington Crossing the Delaware* (1953), which the museum was just about to acquire for its collection. The implicit judgment was that American abstract art was probably finished. This judgment, though mistaken, was made more explicit when the museum organized a disastrous exhibition of figurative art, called "New Images of Man," in the very same year that it mounted "The New American Painting" show. The truth seems to be that Barr took a somewhat ambivalent attitude toward the New York School.

All of this changed in the Sixties. Except for Dorothy Miller, whose record as a curator was outstanding in this regard, the late William Seitz was probably the first curator at the museum who wholeheartedly embraced the New York School. And when Mr. Rubin came to the museum in 1967, he made it a priority item of business from the

outset to strengthen MOMA's collection of Abstract Expressionism and indeed to make it a major focus of the permanent collection.

That he has amply succeeded in fulfilling this ambition will be clear to anyone who visits the new MOMA. For the third-floor gallery space belonging to the Department of Painting and Sculpture is preponderantly devoted to the New York School. In keeping with the scale of Abstract Expressionist painting—there is actually very little sculpture in this section of the installation—the main space is fairly gigantic, the only approximate counterpart to the huge Matisse gallery on the second floor. There is much to admire—and a good deal to question, too—in the way Mr. Rubin has gone about building this New York School collection, and his installation of the collection itself is enormously impressive. My guess is that it will prove to be a mecca for young artists for many years to come.

The implications of all this are fairly obvious. According to the new MOMA, the history of modern art until 1940, or thereabouts, belongs to Paris and its satellites, and after 1940 it is to be found in the New York School and its aftermath. Everything else is to be regarded as marginal or negligible or non-existent. Mr. Rubin is not a man afflicted with a sense of ambivalence when it comes to making artistic judgments. He thinks in categorical terms. As a result, the history of modern art in America prior to 1940 has been largely obliterated. The work of a few expatriate artists remains and a few other isolated examples survive, but for the most part it is a history that the museum has simply dropped. The mean little gallery at the entrance to the third-floor installation that contains whatever remnants of this history have been allowed to survive is, as a survey of the first forty years of American modernism, simply ludicrous. And it is installed in a way that seems almost intended to inspire contempt, with pictures crowded together and a gem like Nadelman's sculpture *Woman at the Piano* (circa 1917) crammed into an absurd little niche, as if it were an appliance on display in a shop.

(Actually, some of the objects on display in MOMA's retail shop are accorded much better treatment.)

To specify in detail what has been omitted in this museological maneuver would require a volume in itself. I shall therefore cite only a few outstanding cases. Hartley is represented by a single painting—naturally, it is from his expatriate period—and Maurer by none. There is no painting by Marin—does the museum own one?—and nothing by Milton Avery! Dove and Stuart Davis are reduced to token representation, and the painters of the American Abstract Artists group are denied even that. But room has been found for a Ben Shahn—it would be interesting to know what Mr. Rubin really thinks of it—and for two minor Hoppers, and the prize acquisition is a painting called *Dunes* (circa 1930) by Augustus Vincent Tack, who is now being “rediscovered” and pressed into service as some kind of forerunner of the Abstract Expressionists. One has the impression that the only painting in this gallery which truly interests Mr. Rubin is the Tack he acquired for the museum five years ago.

It would be a mistake to suggest that the task of selecting an adequate and appropriate representation of early twentieth-century art for MOMA is an easy one. The last thing we would want to see at the museum would be the kind of catch-all survey of minor and innocuous talents of the sort that we see in so many of the galleries of the Pompidou Center, where it seems to be regarded almost as a civil right for a French artist, no matter how abysmal his work, to be represented by something. But between that unhappy practice and the museum's current policy there are many choices to be explored, and no one at MOMA seems to have given them any serious thought. What is now missing at MOMA as far as American art before Abstract Expressionism is concerned is precisely that—serious thought.

Even in the period after 1940 the policy seems to be to exclude any and all figurative painting unless it is European. It is this, I suppose, which accounts for the exclusion

NOW REPRESENTING:

RICHARD ANUSZKIEWICZ

CARMEN CICERO

SUSAN CRILE

ROBERT DE NIRO

SEYMOUR FOGEL

IRVING KRIESBERG

ANNE POOR

JOHN RAIMONDI

PAUL RESIKA

REEVE SCHLEY

ROBERT WHITE



GRAHAM MODERN

1014 MADISON AVENUE AT 78TH STREET
3RD FLOOR (212) 535-5767

Charles Cowles Gallery

Peter Alexander

Gerald Incandela

Nino Longobardi

Dario Villalba

420 West Broadway New York 10012 (212) 925-3500

of Avery. One would have thought that, even in the formalist perspective that Mr. Rubin characteristically brings to these matters, Avery would have been thought to provide the essential link between Matisse and Rothko. But the prejudice against such art is apparently very deep, and so the link has been ignored.

For all practical purposes, then, what MOMA gives us in this third-floor installation is the history of American art *as* the history of the New York School and its aftermath—and from this aftermath, in the so-called “contemporary” section, almost all forms of representational art are likewise excluded. Who could guess from this “contemporary” section that the last twenty years have witnessed a remarkable resurgence of realist painting? Except for a single work by Chuck Close, the policy seems to be that you have to be European to be representational. It is a policy woefully out of touch with the artistic realities of the present moment, and reflects a concept of modernism that has hardened into academic orthodoxy.

Where Mr. Rubin is most at ease—confident of his taste and meticulous in his selection—is in his handling of the New York School, and the museum-going public owes him a considerable debt for persevering in the building of the Abstract Expressionist collection. For anyone who wants to see the New York School as a whole, with major works by Pollock, Motherwell, Reinhardt, Still, Rothko, Gottlieb, Pousette-Dart, Tomlin, Kline, de Kooning, et al., MOMA is now the place to go. I think it was a mistake to include Morris Louis in this company, and Newman has been given a place in the collection that far exceeds his actual accomplishment, but these are matters likely to be corrected with the passage of time. I doubt, too, if every one of the minor Pollocks is worth hanging, and I regret the omission of anything by Pousette-Dart after 1951. (Still, it is marvelous to see the 1940 Pousette-Dart, *Desert*, rescued from storage.) It would have made sense to have had something of Helen Frankenthaler’s from the Fif-

ties, but she is well represented by later work.

If there is a major criticism to be made of the New York School installation, it is in regard to sculpture. Quite properly, David Smith is given priority here. Mr. Rubin’s gift of the sculptor’s great *Australia* (1951) some years ago gave the museum its single finest sculpture of the Abstract Expressionist school, and it looks wonderful in its new setting. All the same, and despite the inclusion of several other Smith sculptures—one of them in the garden—this artist remains seriously underrepresented in the museum collection. Smith was the greatest American sculptor of the twentieth century. From the early Thirties until his death in 1965, he produced an extraordinary and copious oeuvre, and he should be accorded a gallery of his own so that we can follow the course of his development the way we can now follow Picasso’s (as a sculptor) and Giacometti’s.

This, in turn, reminds us that with the exceptions already noted—and they are important ones—MOMA does not really seem to have a very extensive sculpture collection. Noguchi is another artist given the merest token representation, and Nevelson is still another. (The classic Nevelson wall owned by the museum has been left in storage.) The problem seems especially acute where American sculpture is concerned, and the decisions that have been made about what to exhibit and what not to exhibit are often baffling. Allowing an overblown work like Newman’s *Broken Obelisk* (1963-67) to dominate the museum’s sculpture garden is particularly regrettable. Hasn’t anyone noticed how totally it confounds the scale of everything else in that space? But there are still many problems to be worked out in the installation of the sculpture garden as a whole. It contains many fine works—I was delighted to see that a Bryan Hunt bronze has recently been added to them—but little thought seems to have been devoted to their proper disposition. This is too beautiful a space to be left in its current state of disarray.

SCULPTURE

BY XXTH CENTURY MASTERS

arp	greco	marini
calder	hepworth	meadows
degas	kolbe	miro
erdman	lipchitz	moore
ferber	lipton	zadkine
giacometti	magritte	zuniga
	manzu	



Miro
 "Le Pere Ubu," 1974, bronze
 122 x 100 x 80
 48 x 40 x 32"

Weintraub gallery
 992 madison avenue, new york 10021
 (212) 879-1195/879-1132

V. The return of the Salon

Of the many questions that have been raised about the museum's role and the future scope of its responsibilities, none is now more vexing than the problem of its relation to the contemporary art scene. On this question opinion seems to be divided—outside the museum, anyway, if not inside. (Officially nobody at MOMA even acknowledges that a problem exists.) One view is that MOMA should get itself out of the business of putting on contemporary shows altogether. According to this view, the museum is now an institution very largely devoted to the art of a certain historical period, and it would be unwise as well as impractical for it to persist in the attempt to impose its authority in a sphere of artistic endeavor that lies outside its range. Another view, however, insists that direct and continuous involvement in judging, acquiring, and exhibiting new art remains one of the most essential tasks of the museum, if not indeed *the* most essential. According to this view, it would represent a kind of spiritual death for the museum to withdraw from the contemporary scene and become, as it were, a repository of modernist antiquities.

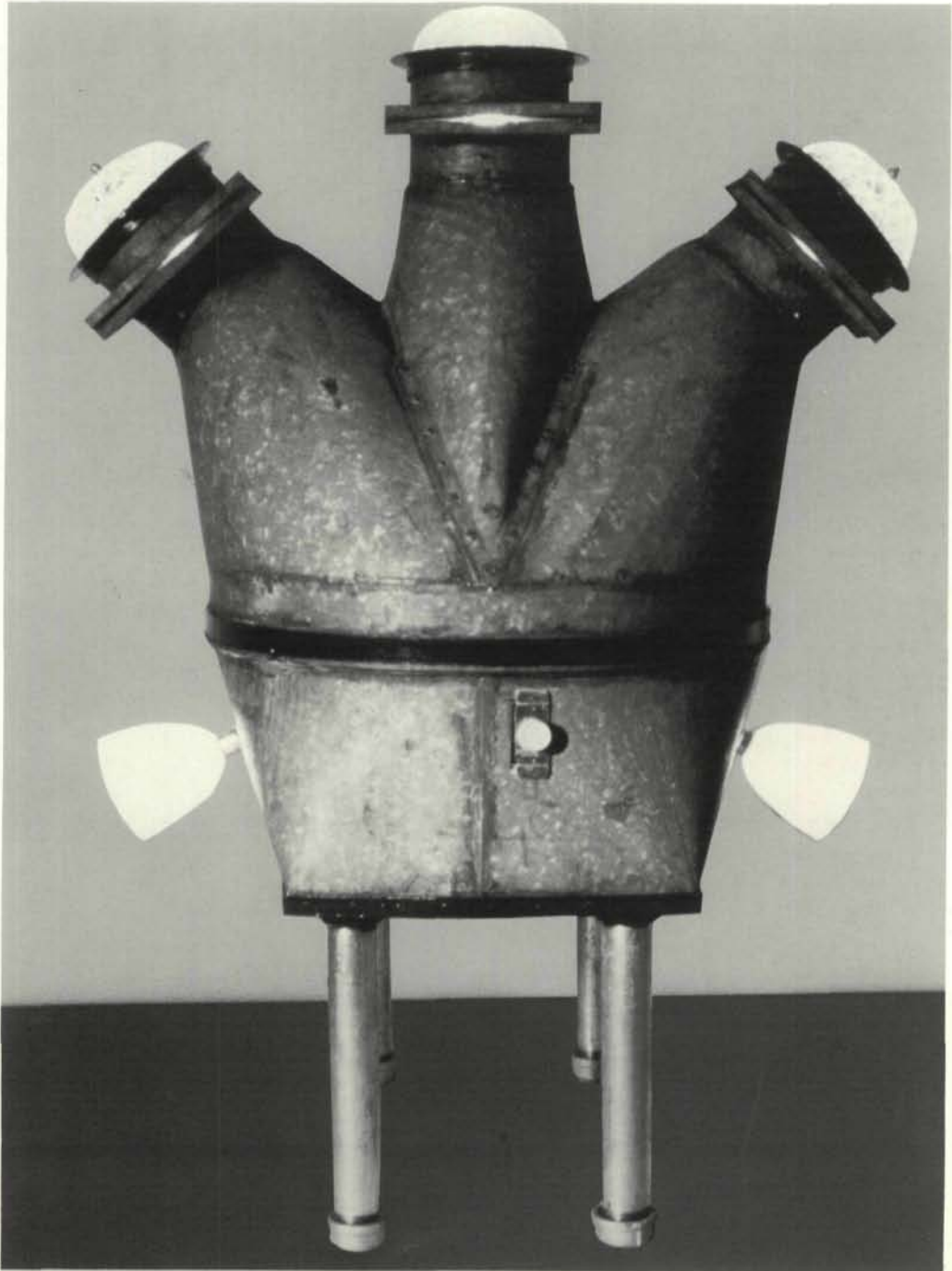
What complicates all attempts to come to terms with this question is the fact—for a fact it surely is—that MOMA, whether or not it persists in its effort to keep up with the contemporary scene, is henceforth going to devote its major energies and resources to exhibiting and documenting modernism's past achievements. This, after all, was the main component of the museum's mission from the beginning, and it remains a still larger part of its mission today. Even if its directors wished to do otherwise, they could not. The modernist classics are now big box-office while new and unknown artists are, by MOMA's standards, hardly any boxoffice at all, and the museum needs the revenues that famous names and big historical subjects guarantee. It is in this sense, as well as others, that the museum is now hostage to the new public it has created for itself. Whatever else it may attempt to do, MOMA now

seems locked forever into concentrating primarily on the classics.

This being the case, the real question then becomes: how much time, space, and money will be available at the museum for dealing with the contemporary art scene, and what sort of staff will the museum muster for the task? The contemporary art world is now enormous and steadily expanding, both here and abroad. It constitutes, among much else, an awesome logistical problem for any museum attempting to keep abreast of its activities. It represents an even more daunting challenge to critical discrimination—and all the more so, I think, because the established conventions and familiar ideologies of modernist art are no longer a reliable guide to quality. Some of the most important art on the contemporary scene may even be said to be anti-modernist in its fundamental assumptions, or to occupy a zone of feeling and conception that is indifferent to the modernist ethos. For MOMA to adopt a policy of categorical resistance to such art and impose rigid tests of modernist orthodoxy would inevitably guarantee a certain sterility and ossification. A tendency in that direction can already be observed in the installation of the "contemporary" section of the third-floor galleries devoted to the permanent collection. Although the installation of this section will be changed, I understand, every three months in order to give the public a broader sense of what the museum has culled from the art of the last two decades, there are unlikely to be any real changes in the spirit of the enterprise. The "line" adopted by the museum is all too clear in the initial selection. It is a line that favors, for example, a third-rate modernist pasticheur like Alexander Liberman over a less easily classified but nonetheless first-rate painter like Fairfield Porter. It is a line that is bound sooner or later to lead to the academicization of modernism, if it hasn't already.

Yet in its dealings with the contemporary art scene it is no solution to this problem for the museum to adopt an "anything goes" policy. But that is more or less the policy that the new MOMA has settled for in

From the exhibition, "An International Survey
of Recent Painting and Sculpture,"
at the Museum of Modern Art



Pelka/Noble, New York

R. M. Fischer, Bertha, 1982. Collection the artist.

Courtesy MOMA



Eric Fischl, Time for Bed, 1981. Collection Martin Sklar.

Courtesy Sperone Westwater, New York



Sandro Chia, Malinconico Accampamento, 1982. Collection Gerald S. Elliott.

Courtesy Gallery Michael Werner, Cologne, West Germany



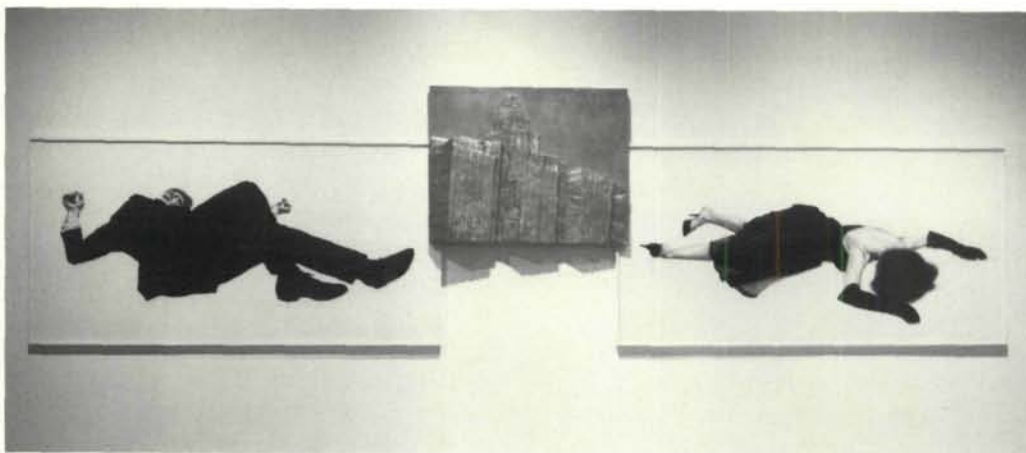
Jörg Immendorff, Café Deutschland IV, 1978.

Courtesy National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, Australia



Peter Booth, Painting 1977. Collection National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, Australia.

Courtesy Metro Pictures, New York



Robert Longo, National Trust, 1981. Collection Walker Art Center.

Jennifer Kotter



Komar and Melamid, Scenes from the Future: Museum of Modern Art, 1983-84. Collection Ronald Feldman Fine Arts, New York.



Courtesy Holly Solomon Gallery, New York

Ned Smyth, Stahahe Sphere, 1978. Collection the artist.

mounting "An International Survey of Recent Painting and Sculpture," the huge exhibition of contemporary art with which the museum has opened its new facilities. Organized by Kynaston McShine, the senior curator in the museum's Department of Painting and Sculpture, this exhibition brings us one hundred and ninety-five works, all executed since 1975, by one hundred and sixty-five artists from seventeen countries. It occupies two immense gallery spaces on the first floor and in the upper basement of the museum. As the catalogue of the exhibition has not yet been published—a sure sign that even after four years' work the selection (if that is the word) involved a great many last-minute decisions—we cannot know for certain what, if anything, Mr. McShine had in mind in assembling this motley survey. All we can be certain of is that the show itself is the most incredible mess the museum has ever given us, and a show that is different in kind from anything the museum has done in the past.

For it is an exhibition that seems to be based on no discernible standard. Even the claim that the show is limited to artists who have made their reputation since 1975 is a specious one, for there are more than a few artists in the exhibition—among them, Frank Auerbach, Rafael Ferrer, Howard Hodgkin, Neil Jenney, Malcolm Morley, Gerhard Richter, William T. Wiley, and Christopher Wilmarth, to name only the most obvious cases—whose work was well known, at least to the world beyond 11 West Fifty-third Street, well before that date. If the exhibition bears a resemblance to anything, it is to the old Salon surveys of the nineteenth century in which discrimination was suspended in favor of a sprawling miscellany. It is precisely this Salon quality that makes the "International Survey" an exhibition different in kind from anything that MOMA has ever done, for it is a throwback to the time when museums devoted to contemporary art did not exist. Some fine work found its way into the Salon, but it was there, more often than not, despite its quality, not because of it, and this is the case with the present exhi-

bition, too. As between work of notable quality and vitality and work of no quality at all, Mr. McShine seems to have adopted an attitude of complete impartiality. Of anything resembling connoisseurship or critical acumen there is not a trace.

What *is* discernible in the exhibition, both in the choices and in the installation, is not a standard but something else—a certain taste and attitude. The taste is easily identified, for it is fatally circumscribed by the facile irony and mocking facetiousness of Camp. This does not mean that every object in the show bears the imprint of a Campy sensibility—though there are plenty of objects here that obviously do, such as those by Longo, Fischer, Smyth, and the remarkably adaptive team of Komar and Melamid. But it does mean that even works of art that are conceived at a great distance from this mode of sensibility are presented to us in a way that compromises their gravity and reduces them to playing the role of a "straight man" in a comic skit. It is appalling, in this respect, to see artists like Anselm Kiefer, Howard Hodgkin, and Christopher Wilmarth—who must be counted among the most accomplished talents on the current scene—exhibited in such an atmosphere. The public that comes to these artists for the first time in this exhibition is actually being cheated of something important.

As expected, there is a significant representation of Neo-Expressionist painting in the "International Survey," and there are some good or at least representative examples of it, too—among them, paintings by Baselitz, Chia, Fischl, Immendorf, Kiefer, Penck, and an Australian named Peter Booth, whose work was new to me. Yet there is no way for the visitor to the exhibition to make any sense of this movement, for it is not treated as a coherent artistic development, with an aesthetic and an ethos of its own. Its strengths are in fact mocked by the egregious triviality of so many of the surrounding objects, and the effect is to make Neo-Expressionism look like just another "outrageous" style we are not expected to take seriously. Here again, the public com-

ing to this art for the first time is being cheated, and an opportunity has been lost to present to that public a truly serious account of one of the most important developments in contemporary art. I suppose there is even a certain symmetry to be found in the way Expressionism has been scanted in the installation of the permanent collection and the way Neo-Expressionism has been blurred in the "International Survey," but if so, it is probably accidental—though a sign, perhaps, of the uncertainty that surrounds the whole subject of Expressionism at the museum.

I doubt very much if we shall ever again see an exhibition like the "International Survey" at MOMA. It seems to have been conceived as a cynical attempt to "catch up" in a single stroke on what has been happening in contemporary art while the museum has been so preoccupied with its own internal affairs, and to regain its lost position as an arbiter of contemporary taste in art. If so, the show is a decided failure in this respect as well as in others. Even the critics who, in the spirit of celebration that surrounded the reopening of the museum, have found ways to praise the exhibition do not really seem to believe in it. The truth is, the show is a huge embarrassment—to the museum, and to the art world at large—and its failure is still another reminder that MOMA and its staff have not yet found a way to come to terms with an art scene which can no longer be fitted into the formalist perspective governing its view of the modernist past.

VI. MOMA in the postmodern era

It has already been observed that from the founding of the museum more than half a century ago, it undertook to define its interests—and thus those of modern art—in broad terms. At that time it was a very radical notion for the museum to give to architecture, industrial design, photography, and film a kind of parity with painting, sculpture, and the graphic arts, and it was from radical precedents—in Germany and Russia

—that Alfred Barr derived his ideas about what a museum devoted to modern art should encompass. He had been to Germany and Russia in the Twenties, and had been deeply impressed with the art—and with the ideas governing the art—which he studied there. These ideas were radical in more than an aesthetic sense—though they were certainly that. They were radical, or at least were thought to be at the time, in their social implications as well. At the Bauhaus in Germany and in the councils of the Russian avant-garde in the early years of the Revolution, the very conception of what art was or should be was altered under the influence of a powerful utopian ideology. As a result, the boundary separating fine art from industrial art was, if not completely abandoned by everyone concerned, at least very much questioned and undermined. Henceforth, from this radical perspective, there were to be no aesthetic hierarchies. A poster might be equal to a painting, a factory or a housing project as much to be esteemed as a great work of sculpture.

It is my impression that at no time in his life was Barr very much interested in politics. It was not, in any case, the political implications of this development that drew him to it. What deeply interested him were its aesthetic implications, and therefore, under his influence, what governed the museum's outlook from its earliest days was a vision that attempted to effect a kind of grand synthesis of modernist aestheticism and the technology of industrialism. It therefore became part of the museum's aesthetic mission to proselytize on behalf of modern architecture and modern design and also, paradoxically, to elevate photography and film to the realm of fine art. This was something genuinely new in the American art world and in the world of the American art museum.

As everyone can now see just by looking around at the visual and cultural environment we in the West inhabit today, MOMA's mission in these matters proved in the end to be a great success. The aesthetic that originated at the Bauhaus and other avant-garde

groups has been stripped of its social ideology and turned into the reigning taste of the cultural marketplace. Modalities of design that were regarded as difficult or esoteric or impossibly “advanced” in the Thirties are now the commonplaces of our civilization. So popular have modern architecture and its accessories become in the last forty years that there is now a widespread (postmodern) reaction against it. In the academy as well as in the media there is a virtual industry dedicated to extolling the aesthetic attributes of film—while film itself, oddly enough, has either declined in quality or become highly esoteric or both. The elevated artistic status of photography in recent years is too well known even to discuss. It would be absurd to claim that MOMA accomplished these important shifts in our cultural life entirely on its own, but the museum certainly played a key role in the history that set them in motion. In important ways, it created the role.

The question that inevitably looms in regard to this phenomenon fifty-five years later, when we find ourselves in a very different era, is this: does the museum—does any museum—any longer have an imperative function to perform that is not simply archival? Or is the museum’s main mission, in regard to such activities, now limited precisely to preserving and codifying past achievement? Is MOMA, in other words, to become simply an archive of the movement it has done so much to popularize and win acceptance for?

Certainly in regard to the Department of Architecture and Design there is every sign that its principal tasks have been completed, and that it now has its attention firmly focused on the past. To the extent that the museum has played an active part in formulating ideas and shaping taste in the field of architecture in recent years, its role has been highly ambivalent. The two most important architectural events that MOMA has been responsible for in the last twenty years have actually been profoundly anti-modernist in substance and influence. The first was the publication, in 1966, of Robert Venturi’s

brilliant manifesto, *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture*, which in many ways set the agenda for the postmodernist movement. The second was the dazzling exhibition devoted to Beaux-Arts architectural drawings in 1975. Together these events wrote *finis* to the whole modernist era in architecture and certainly to MOMA’s own contribution to the history of that era. Yet one has the impression that the architecture which has resulted from this turnabout in taste and theory and practice is abhorrent to the museum. Otherwise why would it have withheld the commission to design the new MOMA from Philip Johnson, who founded the Department of Architecture in 1932 and who, after a first architectural career as a practitioner of modernism (it was Johnson who designed the garden-wing addition in 1964), has gone on to become the most famous postmodernist architect on the contemporary scene? Instead of commissioning Johnson to design the new MOMA, the museum named its new architectural gallery, which consists of models and drawings by the classic figures of modernism, in his honor. The irony is a perfect index of the contradiction in which MOMA now finds itself in its relation to architecture.

As for design at the new MOMA, it has been given the single most sensational installation in the entire museum, with a twenty-four-foot-high space containing the great classics of modern poster design, a showcase of handsome industrial design products, a sleek Italian automobile from the Forties, and—in the most audacious *coup de théâtre* anyone has ever attempted at MOMA—a helicopter suspended over the escalator from the ceiling! In the inside galleries there are wonderful objects from the Art Nouveau era and then—well, we suddenly find ourselves in something that looks vaguely reminiscent of Bloomingdale’s furniture department. It is very hard to believe at that point that such an installation has any real museological function. As history the installation is woefully incomplete, as aesthetics it is something of a comedy, as a standard of good design it is arbitrary. As a

cultural experience it is simply supererogatory. Except for the dreadful furniture display, design at MOMA is still a good show, with wonderful things to look at, but it becomes more and more difficult to believe such an installation is necessary.

MOMA as historical archive and MOMA as a living artistic force: to what extent can these roles, which in the course of recent decades have become distinctly separate from each other, be successfully combined? I have already observed that as far as painting and sculpture are concerned, the museum has no choice but to put its principal energies and resources into showing great names and important historical subjects. The same emphasis will very likely prevail in the Department of Architecture and Design, and it has always been the primary interest of the Department of Film and its loyal public. Almost the only department of the museum which currently plays a leadership role in judging and codifying new work is the Department of Photography—the Department of Prints and Illustrated Books is the other—but the taste of the Department of Photography is so specialized and often so wayward and self-reflexive that there are times when one wishes that it, too, would go back to showing mainly the classics. But that, alas, is a tale for another day.

The new MOMA remains, all the same, a great museum, and one that is still central to our understanding of the culture of this century. Yet with its expanded facilities and its glamorous new image, with its huge new public (and the incessant radio commercials designed to draw the public in) and its incomparable permanent collections, it is now a museum curiously devoid of intellectual leadership. Alfred Barr had set out to create a new kind of art museum in America—a museum that would bring together all the many disparate activities of the modern movement. It was in many ways a noble as well as a novel aspiration, yet in the museum he actually created he was obliged in the course of time to abandon some of the more doctrinaire and utopian aspects of his original program. As a result, even the old MOMA became a museum more preponderantly devoted to high art than Barr had intended it to be at its founding. Today, it is only as an institution specializing in high art that the new MOMA can claim to have a great and necessary purpose. It is for this reason, above all, that it is in such obvious need of the kind of leadership that can do for the postmodern era what Barr and his distinguished colleagues did so successfully in the heyday of modernism. One hesitates to say it, but the truth requires that it be said: Alfred Barr has had no successor.

8th Summer Season

VARUJAN BOGHOSIAN

FRITZ BULTMAN

CARMEN CICERO

SIDEO FROMBOLUTI

ED GIOBBI

BUDD HOPKINS

LEO MANSON

ROBERT MOTHERWELL

PAUL RESIKA

JUDITH ROTHSCHILD

SIDNEY SIMON

NORA SPEYER

TONY VEVERS

LONG POINT GALLERY

AN ARTISTS' PLACE

492 COMMERCIAL STREET, PROVINCETOWN, MA

Telephone: 617-487-9544



MYSTIC STRUCTURE, 1984, UNIQUE BRONZE, 49 × 38 × 36"

JAMES HENDRICKS

NEW BRONZE SCULPTURES

RECENT PAINTINGS AND DRAWINGS

SEPT. 5 — OCT. 6, 1984

OPENING RECEPTION SEPT. 8, 3-5 PM

HELEN SHLIEN GALLERY

14 NEWBURY ST., BOSTON, MA 02116 (617) 267-9418

UNIQUE CASTS BY TALLIX, PEEKSKILL, NY

Skowhegan School of Painting & Sculpture

June 21–August 23, 1984

An independent work program for sixty advanced painters and sculptors with twelve resident and visiting artists working in a rural Maine community.

For information write:
329 East 68th Street
New York, N.Y., 10021
Telephone: 212 861-9270

Resident Artists

Frank Bowling
Stuart Diamond
Richard Haas
Frank Lobdell
John Moore
Barbara Zucker

Visiting Artists

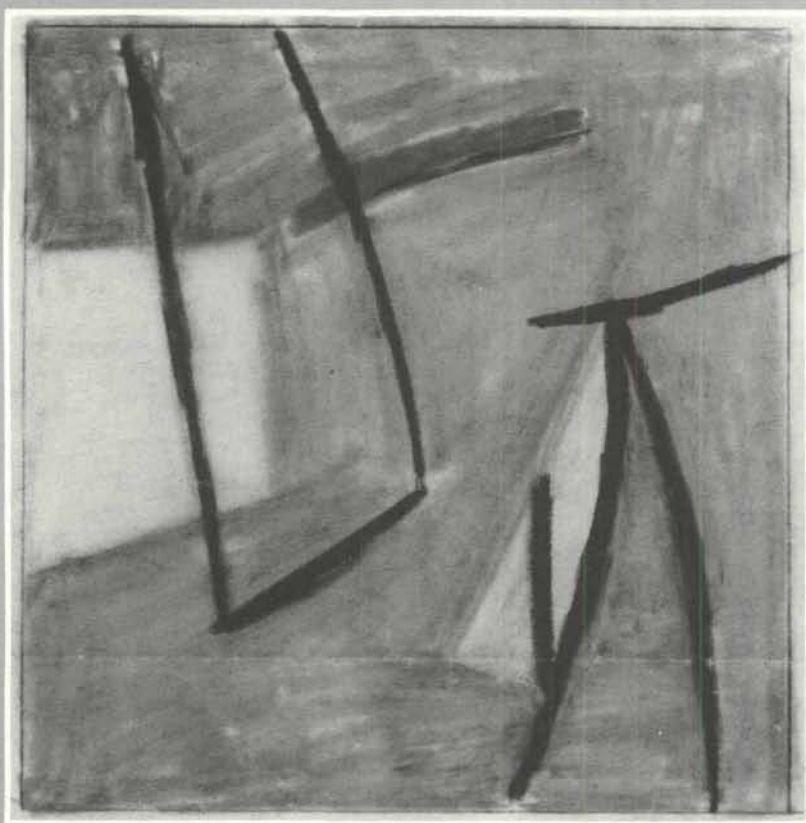
Luis Jimenez
Dorothea Rockburne
Katherine Porter
Jane Wilson
Isaac Witkin

Willard W. Cummings

Lecturer

Leo Steinberg

Burgoyne Diller



Third Theme, c. 1933/34, 7" x 7½", crayon/paper (306).



MEREDITH LONG & CO.

Dealers in 19th & 20th Century American Art

2323 San Felipe • Houston, Texas 77019 • (713) 523-6671

Tuesday–Saturday, 10–6

Representing Contemporary Artists

Dan Christensen

John Adams Griefen

Darryl Hughto

Bill Noland

Peter Reginato

Kikuo Saito

Clifford Ross

Susan Roth

Salander-O'Reilly Galleries, Inc.

22 East 80 Street New York, NY 10021 Telephone (212)879-6606

ZABRISKIE

REPRESENTS THE FOLLOWING
CONTEMPORARY ARTISTS:

PAT ADAMS

HARRY CALLAHAN

MARY FRANK

LEE FRIEDLANDER

LESTER JOHNSON

WILLIAM KLEIN

KENNETH SNELSON

TIMOTHY WOODMAN

724 FIFTH AVENUE, NEW YORK NY 10019

TEL 212 307-7430

37 RUE QUINCAMPOIX, PARIS 75004

TEL 272-3547

GREGORY PAQUETTE

DRAWINGS

SEPTEMBER 11-OCTOBER 6, 1984



"Still life with Artichokes," 1983, charcoal/conté/lead on paper, 28" x 40"

STAEMPFLI

47 EAST 77 ST., NEW YORK

Tel. 212/535-1919

ARMSTRONG

GALLERY/HARRIET LEBISH, DIRECTOR
50 WEST 57th NY 10019 (212) 582-8581

ARMSTRONG GALLERY SALUTES THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

HAROLD BRUDER, DIANE BURKO,
JIMMY ERNST (selected works from estate),
AUDREY FLACK (1953-1968),
CONNIE FOX, SAM GELBER,
CLEVE GRAY, LEE HALL,
JOHN HARDY, PATTI HANSEN,
BUDD HOPKINS, LEATRICE ROSE,
JUNE WAYNE, Photographs of
BERENICE ABBOTT and LEWIS W. HINE

Our artists are represented in the
following American museums:

Brooklyn Museum
Corcoran Gallery of Art
Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum
Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden
Los Angeles County Museum of Art
Metropolitan Museum of Art
Museum of Modern Art
National Gallery of Art
National Museum of American Art
Neuberger Museum, SUNY, Purchase
Philadelphia Museum of Art
Phillips Collection

Excellent Books on Art, Architecture, Photography



FRANCIS BACON Michel Leiris

This dramatic volume, illustrated entirely in color, is the most comprehensive ever published on Francis Bacon, one of England's foremost living painters. "Bacon's gorgeously painted, distorted figures in simple, quite naturalistic settings are forceful reminders of mortality."—*Los Angeles Times*. "Involved in all aspects of the book's production, Bacon included many startling new works, which makes this the single most complete volume available."—*Chicago Tribune*. "Features a long and perceptive essay on Bacon's highly provocative work by French critic, Michel Leiris. Recommended."—*Choice*. "Bacon, a Londoner, has a nightmare outlook. The figures in his portraits are highly colored and contorted in full painterly style. This book documents his years of work with many excellent reproductions. A quality production, recommended."—*Library Journal*. 252 pages. 241 illustrations with 12 gatefolds. \$75



MODERN ARCHITECTURE 1851-1945

Text by Kenneth Frampton.
Photographs by Yukio Futagawa.

"In this extraordinary volume, Frampton and Futagawa have combined their talents to produce a visually stunning, comprehensive survey of modern architecture. Frampton's ten incisive essays cover the major stylistic and socio-political currents, supplemented by detailed descriptions of representative buildings of each period. Futagawa's hauntingly evocative photographs make even the images of familiar classics seem fresh and exuberant. Sets a new standard for books of this type. Highly recommended."—*Library Journal* "The text written with precision and imagination is enhanced by spectacular architectural photography."—*Booklist*. Hardcover: 464 pages. 670 illus., 70 in color. \$65. Paperback: Vol I (1851-1919) 210 pages. 340 illus., 40 in color. \$29.95. Vol II (1920-1945): 254 pages. 330 illus., 30 in color. \$29.95



TINA MODOTTI: A Fragile Life Mildred Constantine

"Most intriguing of new photography books is *Tina Modotti*, an illustrated biography of the woman known mainly as Edward Weston's beautiful mistress and model in the mid-1920's and later as an exotic revolutionary. The author (associate curator at MOMA from 1949-1972) traces the photographer/activist from her Italian birth through life in the U.S. and Mexico; her involvement with Weston and Mexican muralists; her participation in Communist politics and social causes in Mexico, Germany, Spain and the Soviet Union."—*Los Angeles Times*. "This unusual book is a credit to Rizzoli for taking on rare works by a virtually forgotten photographer and bringing her images back to life for all of us."—*Los Angeles Herald*. "Constantine's biography has rescued Modotti's life and work from some of the mystery that surrounded it. Modotti emerges a memorable, noble woman."—*Worldview*. 224 pages. 80 photographs \$30

At all fine bookstores, or from

RIZZOLI

712 Fifth Ave./New York 10019

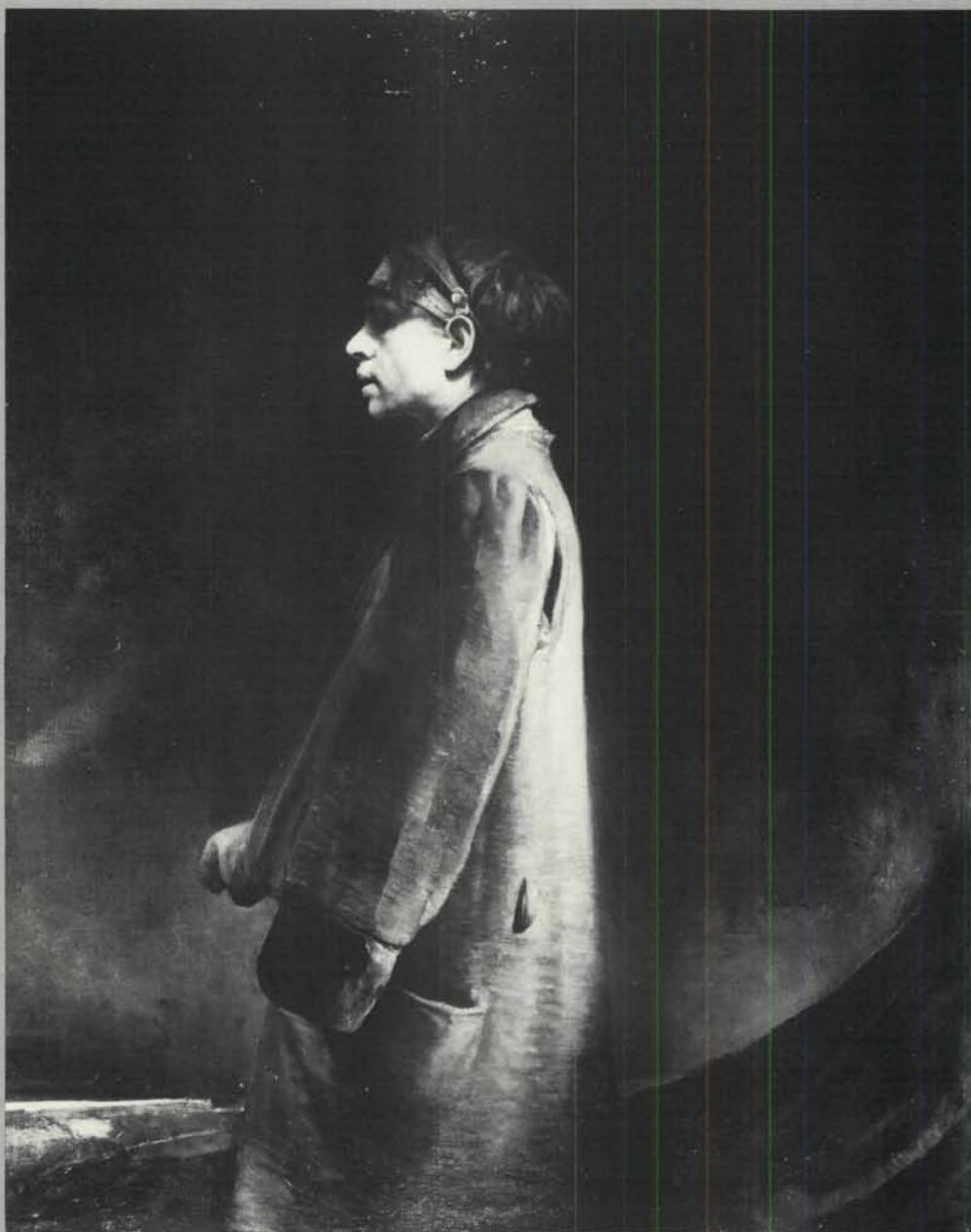


Richard Rappaport



'Unearthed'

ODD NERDRUM



"Self-Portrait," 1983, oil on canvas

71 x 58"

MARTINA HAMILTON
GALLERY

19 East 71 Street • New York 10021 • (212) 744-8976

THE GRACE BORGENICHT
GALLERY CONGRATULATES
THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART
ON THE OCCASION OF THE
RE-OPENING OF THE MUSEUM

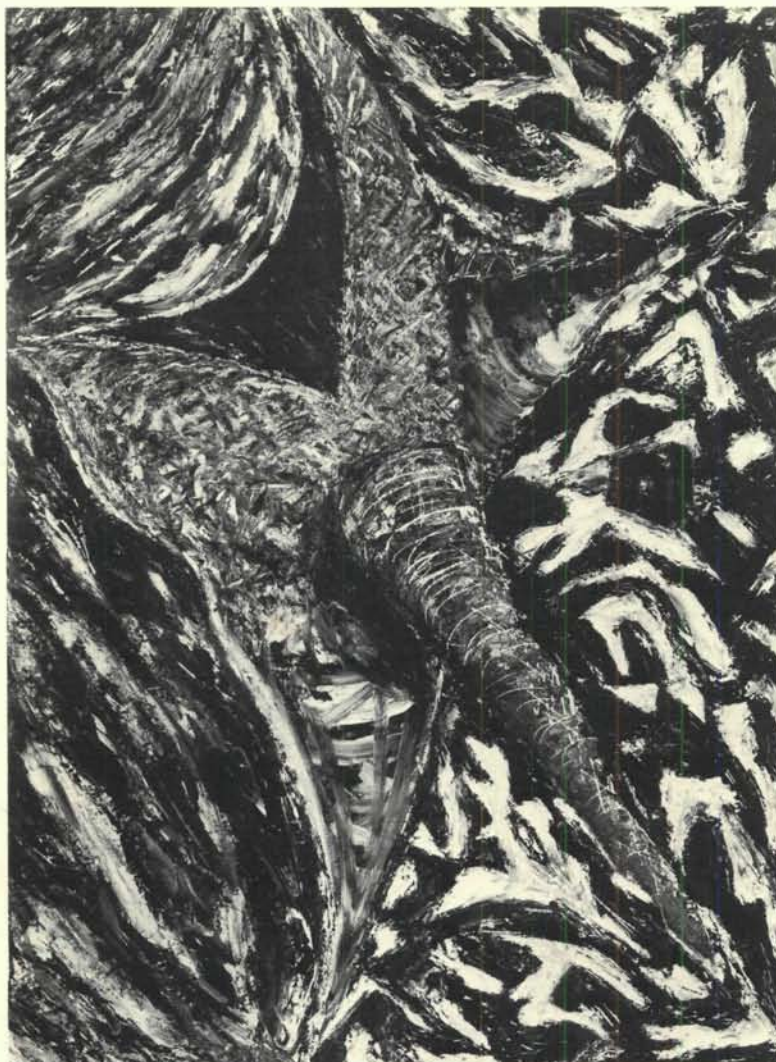
GALLERY ARTISTS
REPRESENTED IN MoMA'S
PERMANENT COLLECTION:

Milton Avery
Max Beckmann
Charles Biederman
Paul Burlin
Edward Corbett
Stuart Davis
Jose de Rivera
Roy Gussow
Angelo Ippolito
Wolf Kahn
John Oppen
Gabor Peterdi
Attilio Saleme
Mark Tansey
Elbert Weinberg

GALLERY ARTISTS
IN THE OPENING
EXHIBITION:

Max Beckmann
Stuart Davis
Mark Innerst
Mark Tansey

GRACE BORGENICHT GALLERY
724 FIFTH AVENUE NEW YORK



Bill Jensen, *The Tempest*, 1980-81, oil on linen, 30 x 22 inches, Private Collection
An International Survey of Recent Painting & Sculpture, The Museum of Modern Art

WASHBURN GALLERY 42 EAST 57 & 113 GREENE NEW YORK

The New Criterion
850 Seventh Avenue
Suite 503
New York NY 10019

Second Class Postage
Paid at New York, NY
and at additional
Mailing Offices

DGOLDZP15CL27ZA 08/31/84
PHILIP GOULD
15 CLAREMONT AVE
NEW YORK, NY 10027